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# THE GODS OF ANCIENT GREECE

IDENTITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS



Edited by Jan N. Bremmer and Andrew Erskine

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# THE GODS OF ANCIENT GREECE

*Identities and Transformations*

Edited by  
Jan N. Bremmer and  
Andrew Erskine

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## PREFACE

The Greek gods are still very much present in modern consciousness, whereas the ancient rituals have been long forgotten. Yet even though Apollo and Dionysos, Artemis and Aphrodite, Zeus and Hermes are household names, they have hardly been at the centre of the modern study of Greek religion. From the most influential and innovative students of Greek religion of the last half of the twentieth century, Walter Burkert concentrated on myth and ritual, and Jean-Pierre Vernant made his name with studies of the psychological and sociological aspects of Greek culture. The gods were never the real focus of their attention. In fact, their lack of interest continued a situation that had already begun at the start of the twentieth century when classical scholars started to turn their attention to ritual rather than myth and the gods.

It is clear that a century of scholarly neglect of such an important area of Greek religion cannot be remedied by the appearance of a single book. That is why we have brought together a team of international scholars with a view to generating new approaches to, rather than providing a comprehensive survey of, the nature and development of the Greek gods in the period from Homer until late antiquity. Moreover, we have tried to go beyond the usual ways of handbooks which traditionally concentrate on the individual divinities. Naturally, the contributors look at specific gods, but they also pose questions about the gods more generally: what actually is a Greek god? To what extent do cult, myth and literary genre determine the nature of a divinity? How do the Greek gods function in a polytheistic pantheon? What is the influence of philosophy? What does archaeology tell us about the gods? In what way do the gods in late antiquity differ from those in classical Greece? In short, the aim of this volume is to present a synchronic and diachronic view of the gods as they functioned in Greek culture until the triumph of Christianity.

The chapters that make up the volume have their origins in

a conference held in Edinburgh in November 2007 during Jan Bremmer's tenure as the Fifth Leventis Visiting Professor of Greek. Our greatest debt has been to the A. G. Leventis Foundation and Mr George David for the generous financial support that made both the conference and its publication possible. The biennial professorship and its accompanying conference have since the late 1990s become a central feature of Greek studies in Edinburgh.

Many helped at the various stages of the book's development from idea to publication. In particular we would like to thank Jill Shaw, whose efficient co-ordination of all elements of the conference contributed to its success; Christopher Strachan, for allowing himself to be persuaded to translate Claude Calame's chapter from the original French; Eline Veldt, who did so much editorial work on the chapters; Douglas Cairns and Keith Rutter, whose experience on earlier volumes has been invaluable to us; Marie McCallum, for preparing the index; and, last but not least, Máiréad McElligott and Carol Macdonald, for guiding the book through Edinburgh University Press.

Jan Bremmer  
Andrew Erskine

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# ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for Greek and Latin texts for the most part follow those of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn (OCD<sup>3</sup>; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

|                |                                                                                                       |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>AD</i>      | <i>Archaiologikon Deltion</i>                                                                         |
| <i>AJA</i>     | <i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>                                                                |
| <i>AJPh</i>    | <i>American Journal of Philology</i>                                                                  |
| <i>AnnEpig</i> | <i>L'Année Epigraphique</i>                                                                           |
| <i>ANRW</i>    | <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>                                                     |
| <i>ASAA</i>    | <i>Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene</i>                                                    |
| <i>ASNP</i>    | <i>Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa</i>                                                  |
| <i>BASP</i>    | <i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>                                              |
| <i>BCH</i>     | <i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>                                                          |
| <i>BICS</i>    | <i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>                                                 |
| <i>CAH</i>     | <i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)                          |
| <i>CIERGA</i>  | Centre International d'Etude de la Religion Grecque Antique                                           |
| <i>CIG</i>     | <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i>                                                                 |
| <i>ClAnt</i>   | <i>Classical Antiquity</i>                                                                            |
| <i>CPh</i>     | <i>Classical Philology</i>                                                                            |
| <i>CQ</i>      | <i>Classical Quarterly</i>                                                                            |
| <i>CRAI</i>    | <i>Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>                    |
| <i>CSCA</i>    | <i>Californian Studies in Classical Antiquity</i>                                                     |
| <i>DT</i>      | A. Audollent, <i>Defixionum tabellae</i> (Paris: Fontemoing, 1904)                                    |
| <i>DTA</i>     | R. Wünsch, <i>Defixionum Tabellae Atticae, Inscriptiones Graecae</i> 3.3 (Chicago: Ares, [1897] 1978) |
| <i>GRBS</i>    | <i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>                                                            |
| <i>HSCPh</i>   | <i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>                                                         |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>HThR</i>       | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i>                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>I.Chios</i>    | F. Graf, <i>Nordionische Kulte</i> (Rome: Institut Suisse, 1984), pp. 427–61                                                                                                    |
| <i>I.Cos</i>      | W. R. Paton and E. L. Hicks, <i>The Inscriptions of Cos</i> (Oxford, 1891)                                                                                                      |
| <i>ICS</i>        | <i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>I.Didyma</i>   | A. Rehm, <i>Didyma, II. Die Inschriften</i> , ed. R. Harder (Berlin, 1958)                                                                                                      |
| <i>I.Ephes.</i>   | H. Wankel et al., <i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos, I–VII</i> (IGSK vols 11–17; Bonn, 1979–81)                                                                                    |
| <i>I.Erythrai</i> | H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach, <i>Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai, I–II</i> (IGSK vols 1–2; Bonn 1972–3)                                                           |
| <i>I.Gonnoi</i>   | B. Helly, <i>Gonnoi. 2: Les inscriptions</i> (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1973)                                                                                                         |
| <i>IGSK</i>       | <i>Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien</i> (Bonn, 1972–)                                                                                                             |
| <i>I.Iasos</i>    | W. Blümel, <i>Die Inschriften von Iasos</i> (IGSK vol. 28 1/2; Bonn, 1985)                                                                                                      |
| <i>I.Lindos</i>   | C. Blinkenberg, <i>Lindos: fouilles et recherché. II: Fouilles de l'acropole. Inscriptions</i> (Berlin, 1941)                                                                   |
| <i>I.Milet</i>    | P. Herrmann, <i>Inschriften von Milet. Milet: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahr 1899. Vol. VI parts 1–3</i> (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997–2006)      |
| <i>I.Mylasa</i>   | W. Blümel, <i>Die Inschriften von Mylasa, I: Inschriften der Stadt</i> (IGSK vol. 34, Bonn, 1987); <i>II: Inschriften aus der Umgebung der Stadt</i> (IGSK vol. 35; Bonn, 1988) |
| <i>I.Pergamon</i> | M. Fraenkel, <i>Die Inschriften von Pergamon, I–II</i> (Berlin, 1890–.)                                                                                                         |
| <i>I.Priene</i>   | F. H. von Gaertringen, <i>Die Inschriften von Priene</i> (Berlin: Reimer, 1906)                                                                                                 |
| <i>JDAI</i>       | <i>Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts</i>                                                                                                                         |
| <i>JHS</i>        | <i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>LIMC</i>       | <i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i>                                                                                                                             |
| <i>LSAM</i>       | F. Sokolowski, <i>Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure</i> (Paris: De Boccard, 1955)                                                                                                  |
| <i>LSCG</i>       | F. Sokolowski, <i>Lois sacrées des cités grecques</i> (Paris: De Boccard, 1969)                                                                                                 |
| <i>LSJ</i>        | H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9th edn (Oxford, 1940).                                                                               |
| <i>LSS</i>        | F. Sokolowski, <i>Lois sacrées des cités grecques, Supplément</i> (Paris: De Boccard, 1962)                                                                                     |

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>MDAI(A)</i>   | <i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Athens)</i>                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>MEFRA</i>     | <i>Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'Ecole française de Rome</i>                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Milet I:2</i> | H. Knackfuss et al., <i>Das Rathaus von Milet. Milet: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahr 1899</i> . Vol. I part 2 (Berlin: Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut, 1908)                             |
| <i>Milet I:7</i> | H. Knackfuss and A. Rehm, <i>Der Südmarkt und die benachbarten Bauanlagen. Milet: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahr 1899</i> . Vol. I part 7 (Berlin: Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut, 1924) |
| <i>PDM</i>       | <i>Papyri Demoticae Magicae</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>PGM</i>       | <i>Papyri Graecae Magicae</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>PMG</i>       | D. L. Page, <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962)                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>RAC</i>       | <i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>RE</i>        | <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>REG</i>       | <i>Revue des Etudes Grecques</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>SMSR</i>      | <i>Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni</i>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Stobi</i>     | J. Wiseman, <i>Stobi: A Guide to the Ancient City</i> (Beograd: National Museum of Titov Veles, 1973)                                                                                                                           |
| <i>TAPhA</i>     | <i>Transactions of the American Philological Society</i>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>ThesCRA</i>   | <i>Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum: Lexikon antiker Kulte und Riten</i> , 5 vols (Los Angeles: Getty, 2004–6)                                                                                                             |
| <i>TLG</i>       | <i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i> ( <a href="http://www.tlg.uci.edu">http://www.tlg.uci.edu</a> )                                                                                                                                |
| <i>VigChris</i>  | <i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>YCS</i>       | <i>Yale Classical Studies</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>ZPE</i>       | <i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>                                                                                                                                                                               |





# Introduction

## THE GREEK GODS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

*Jan N. Bremmer*

When the first Indo-Europeans entered Greece in the early centuries of the second millennium BC, they arrived not without gods. So much is clear from comparisons with other Indo-European cultures. It is much harder to know whom they brought and how they called their gods. For reasons unknown, at an early stage the Greeks seem to have dropped the term *\*deiwós*, ‘god’, attested in nearly all branches of the Indo-European family, which is a derivative of IE *\*dyew-/diw-*, which denoted the bright sky or the light of day.<sup>1</sup> Instead they opted for *theós*, originally ‘having the sacred’, cognates of which have been recognized in Armenian and, rather recently, in Lycian, Lydian and Hieroglyphic Luwian.<sup>2</sup> The change must have happened at an early stage of Greek history, as it had already taken place in Mycenaean times, the oldest period for which we have evidence regarding the gods of ancient Greece, as the frequent attestations of Linear B *te-o* show.

Traditionally, the Indo-Europeans located their gods in heaven, as did the Greeks. In Homer, and thus surely going back to Mycenaean times, the gods are the ‘heavenly ones’ or those ‘who occupy the broad heaven’, whereas mortals live on the earth, but the expression ‘gods and men’ with its variants must be equally old and is formulaic in Homer.<sup>3</sup> Another old element of speaking about the gods is the notion

For comments I am grateful to Andrew Erskine, Bob Fowler, Jose Luis García Ramón and, especially, Albert Henrichs.

1 M. L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 120.

2 C. Watkins, “‘Hermit crabs,’ or new wine in old bottles: Anatolian and Hellenic connections from Homer and before to Antiochus I of Commagene and after”, in B. J. Collins et al. (eds), *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and Their Neighbours* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2008), pp. 134–41 at 139–40.

3 Heaven: *Iliad* 1.570; 3.364; 5.373, 867, 898; 7.178, etc. Earth: *Odyssey* 6.150–3; Hes. *Th.* 372–3, cf. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 120, 126; R. Janko on *Il.* 14.198 (‘gods and men’).

that the gods had a different language from men, such as when Homer (*Il.* 14.290–1) tells us that an owl is called *chalkis* by the gods but *kumindis* by men; the occurrence of this notion in Hittite, Old Irish, Old Norse and Greek texts shows that it is already Indo-European and must have been part of the poetic vocabulary of the invading Greeks.<sup>4</sup>

In the first chapter of this volume Albert Henrichs has identified three divine properties that set gods apart from mortals and define their divinity, namely immortality, anthropomorphism and power. Unfortunately, due to their administrative nature, the Mycenaean tablets are totally uninformative about the nature of the gods, but comparisons with other Indo-European peoples once again suggest that these properties will have been there from the very beginning of Greek religion, as will have been divine invisibility; in Mycenaean times there may have even been an ‘invisible god’,<sup>5</sup> just as the later Greeks worshipped an ‘unknown god’ (Acts of the Apostles 17.23).<sup>6</sup> In any case, the gods certainly received a cult, as offerings, sacrifices, but not bloody ones, and sanctuaries are well attested, although again without many details of note.<sup>7</sup>

There can be little doubt that the Mycenaeans knew a number of gods, if not as many as the thousand gods of the Hittites.<sup>8</sup> Yet there

4 See more recently C. de Lamberterie, ‘Grec homérique *môly*: étymologie et poétique’, *LALIES* 6 (1988), pp. 129–38; F. Bader, *La langue des dieux, ou l’hermétisme des poètes indo-européens* (Pisa: Giardini, 1989); West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 160–2; A. Willi, *Sikelismos* (Basel: Schwabe, 2009), pp. 247–49.

5 J. L. García Ramón, ‘Anthroponymica Mycenaea: 5. *a-wi-do-to* /*Awisto-dotos*/ und die unsichtbaren Götter im Alph.-Griechischen. 6. *we-re-na-ko* und Myk. \*/*wrēn*/: alph.-gr. °*qqn*v, °*qñ*v’, *Živa Antika* 55 (2005), pp. 85–97 at 86–91; West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 127–34 (‘Characteristics of divinity’).

6 P. W. van der Horst, *Hellenism–Judaism–Christianity: Essays on Their Interaction* (Louvain: Peeters, 1994), pp. 165–202 (= *ANRW* II 18.2, 1989, pp. 1426–56); A. Henrichs, ‘Anonymity and polarity: unknown gods and nameless altars at the Areopagus’, *ICS* 19 (1994), pp. 27–58.

7 Offerings and sacrifices: J. Weilhartner, *Mykenische Opfergaben nach Aussage der Linear B-Texte* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005); H. Whittaker, ‘Burnt animal sacrifice in Mycenaean cult: a review of the evidence’, *Opuscula Atheniensia* 31–2 (2006–7), pp. 183–90. Sanctuaries: A. Mazarakis Ainian, *From Rulers’ Dwellings to Temples: Architecture, Religion and Society in Early Iron Age Greece* (1100–700 BC) (Jonsered: Paul Aström, 1997); F. Rougemont, ‘Les noms des dieux dans les tablettes inscrites en linéaire B’, in N. Belayche et al. (eds), *Nommer les dieux: Théonymes, épithètes, épicleses dans l’Antiquité* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 325–88 at 339–41; J. L. García Ramón, ‘Der Begriff des Heiligtums aus sprachgeschichtlicher Perspektive’, in C. Frevel and H. von Hesberg (eds), *Kult und Kommunikation* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), pp. 17–38.

8 B. H. L. van Gessel, *Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon*, 3 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1998–2001).

must have been enough to make the expression ‘all the gods’, which we find in Mycenaean Knossos,<sup>9</sup> meaningful. And indeed, at present there are more than forty names of minor and major divinities known in the Linear B tablets,<sup>10</sup> of whom about one-third survived into the first millennium in the same form or as a variant: Ares,<sup>11</sup> Artemis, Dionysos, Diwia (below), Eileithyia, Enyalios, Erinys, Hephaistos, Hera,<sup>12</sup> Hermes, Mother of the Gods,<sup>13</sup> Poseidon, the Winds, whose priestesses are mentioned in Knossos, and Zeus. Other names that survived into later times are Enesidaon, Erinys, Paeôn and Potnia, but they have lost their independent status: Enesidaon probably became an epithet of Poseidon as En(n)osidas,<sup>14</sup> as did Erinys of Demeter (Paus. 8.25.5), and Paeôn, although still independent in the *Iliad* (5.401, 900), soon ended up as an epithet of Apollo and Asklepios.<sup>15</sup> Potnia was a generic designation for goddesses in Mycenaean;<sup>16</sup> it survived in Homer as a formulaic epithet, especially of Hera and ‘mother’, which occurs mainly at the end of a verse.<sup>17</sup> Finally, as the Linear B texts come from only a few places in Greece, mainly Pylos, Knossos, Khania and Thebes, it is not surprising that some old gods also survived elsewhere. In Homer we not only find Helios, the sun god, but also Eos, the goddess of dawn, both marginalized in the Greek pantheon, but of incontestably Indo-European origin.<sup>18</sup> Sparta worshipped Helen as a goddess, and her myths strongly suggest that she goes back to the Indo-European

9 The expression is ancient, at least Graeco-Aryan, cf. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 122, 127. On the relationships between the gods see J. Gulizio, ‘Mycenaean religion at Knossos’, *Pasiphae* 1 (2007 [2008]), pp. 351–8.

10 See the detailed discussion, with full references, by Rougemont, ‘Les noms des dieux’.

11 J. L. García Ramón, ‘Mykenische Personennamen und griechische Dichtung und Phraseologie: *i-su-ku-wo-do-to* und *a-re-me-ne, a-re-i-me-ne*’, *Pasiphae* 1 (2007 [2008]), pp. 323–35 at 329–35.

12 J. de la Genière (ed.), *Héra: images, espaces, cultes* (Naples: Centre Jean Bérard, 1997); J. N. Bremmer, ‘Hera’, in L. Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 2005<sup>2</sup>), pp. 3914–16; A. Willi, ‘Hera, Eros, Iuno Sororia’, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, forthcoming.

13 For this complicated figure, which perhaps should be translated in Linear B as ‘Divine Mother’, see P. Borgeaud, *La Mère des dieux* (Paris: Seuil, 1996).

14 Stesichorus S 105.10 Davies; Pind. *P.* 4.33, 173, *Pae.* 52d.41, 60a.6.

15 I. Rutherford, *Pindar’s Paeans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 13–17; F. Graf, *Apollo* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 81–4, 139.

16 C. Boëlle, *Po-ti-ni-ja: l’élément féminin dans la religion mycénienne, d’après les archives en linéaire B* (Nancy: ADRA and Paris: de Boccard, 2004).

17 Hera: *Il.* 1.357, 4.50, etc. Mother: 1.357, 6.264, etc.

18 West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 194–217 (Sun), 217–27 (Dawn).

Sun-Maiden.<sup>19</sup> In Boeotia, Zeus' consort was called Plataia, 'Broad'. As Prthivī, 'Broad', is also the name of Earth, Heaven's wife in the Vedas, it seems that this ancient pairing survived in a Boeotian backwater.<sup>20</sup> Different invading groups of Greeks may well have brought along or preserved different parts of their Indo-European heritage.

The above list shows that several major Greek gods are still absent from the Mycenaean pantheon: Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena and Demeter. As the last of these is also rare in Homer, she perhaps was much older than our evidence suggests. Traditionally, her name has been interpreted as 'Earth Mother' on the basis of Indo-European parallels, but the first element of her name, \**Dā*, is still much debated.<sup>21</sup> Athena may well have developed from the Mycenaean 'Potnia of Atana' (below), whereas the other two gods seem to have been 'imports'. Already early on, the Greeks themselves connected Aphrodite with Cyprus, and modern research still considers this island an important station in the transmission of Eastern influence on the formation of the goddess.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the origin of Apollo is still disputed and, at present, his etymology cannot be considered as assured. Although the Greeks themselves sometimes connected Apollo with Lycia,<sup>23</sup> the Lycian name for Apollo was Natr, as the trilingual inscription of Xanthos now demonstrates.<sup>24</sup> A connection

19 SEG 26.457, 458, cf. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 230–6; N. Laneres, 'L'harpax de Théragné ou le digamma d'Hélène', in M. B. Hatzopoulos (ed.), *Phônês charaktêr ethnikos* (Athens and Paris: de Boccard, 2007), pp. 237–69.

20 W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 132–4; West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 174, 178, 181.

21 West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 175–8; A. Willi, 'Demeter, Gê, and the Indo-European word(s) for "earth"' *Historische Sprachforschung* 120 (2007), pp. 169–94. This element can hardly be separated from the name of the goddess Deio, whose name, as Andreas Willi (email, 2 June 2009) explains, probably is 'derivative in -ω (like other similar divine "sobriquets" in -ω) based indeed on Demeter's name (i.e. the first "earth" part of it). With the -i- this may be slightly less straightforward, but on balance I would still think that a connection must have been there – at the very least folk-etymologically . . . Deio looks to me like an artificial formation anyway, perhaps a poetic or cultic creation; and in such a context, many deviations from the most "usual" formation patterns are of course imaginable'; cf. J. N. Bremmer, 'Rescuing Deio in Sophocles and Euripides', *ZPE* 158 (2007), p. 27.

22 *Od.* 8.362–3; *Hes. Th.* 199; Sappho 22.16, 134 Voigt; Alcaeus 296b.1, 380 Voigt; *Hom. H. Aphrodite* 2, 58–9; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), pp. 152–3; J. C. Franklin, 'Cyprus, Greek epic, and Kypriaka', in Y. Maurey et al. (eds), *Sounds from the Past: Music in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean Worlds = Yuval – Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre* 8 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 2010).

23 *Il.* 4.101, 119; *Eur. F* 700 Kannicht; *Arr. Bith.* fr. 34 Roos.

24 O. Corrubá, 'Cario *Natri* ed egizio n t r "dio"', in M. Fritz and S. Zeilfelder (eds), *Novalis Indogermanica* (Graz: Leykam, 2002), pp. 75–84.

with the Hittite god Appaliunaš (attested c.1280 BC) is perhaps not impossible, but that is as far as we can go.<sup>25</sup> It is clear, then, that from the very beginning the Greek pantheon was a dynamic group of gods and goddesses with winners and losers in the course of time.

There was probably a hierarchy among Mycenaean divinities, as Poseidon is mentioned most and receives the greatest number of offerings in Pylos. Rather surprisingly, he almost certainly had a wife, Posidaeja (PY Tn 316.4), just as Zeus seems to have had a wife Diwia, who survived in outlying Pamphylia,<sup>26</sup> but who was already replaced in Mycenaean times by Hera.<sup>27</sup> Zeus and Hera even have a son, Drimios (PY Tn 316.8–9), but he, too, is no longer attested in the first millennium. As in classical times, some of these gods seem to have had an epithet, an important part of the Greek divine personality, which is gradually receiving long overdue attention.<sup>28</sup> This is especially clear in the case of Potnia, a generic epithet that was applied to different goddesses and determined by a reference to a cult place or a specific characteristic. The topographical title ‘Potnia of Atana’ (KN V 52.1) is comparable to other topographical epithets, such as Apollo Delios or Aphrodite Paphia, and the ‘Potnia of the horses’ (PY An 1281.1) looks very much like the later Athena Hippiia or Poseidon Hippios, ‘of the horses’. The most intriguing combination is Hermes Areias (PY Tn 316.7), which resembles the later Athena Areia or Aphrodite Areia.<sup>29</sup> But whereas in classical Greek religion a goddess is always combined with the adjectival form of a god, or vice versa,<sup>30</sup> this is clearly not yet the case in Mycenaean times.

From Homer onwards, these divinities, which remain hardly more than names in the Mycenaean texts, become visible as individual

25 R. Beekes, ‘The origin of Apollo’, *Journal of Ancient Near-Eastern Religions* 3 (2003), pp. 1–23, overlooked by the unpersuasive R. Rósol, ‘Die Herkunft des Gottesnamen Apollon’, *Glotta* 83 (2007), pp. 222–42; Graf, *Apollo*, pp. 130–42.

26 C. Brixhe, ‘Achéens et Phrygiens en Asie Mineure: approche comparative de quelques données lexicales’, in Fritz and Zeilfelder, *Novalis Indogermanica*, pp. 49–73 at 54–5 (Pamphylia); Rougemont, ‘Les noms des dieux’, p. 337 n. 63 (Linear B).

27 G. Dunkel, ‘Vater Himmels Gattin’, *Die Sprache* 34 (1988–90), pp. 1–26, also claimed an Indo-European ancestry for Dione from Dodona, but note the objections of West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, p. 192.

28 P. Brulé, ‘Le langage des épicleses dans le polythéisme hellénique’, *Kernos* 11 (1998), pp. 13–34, updated in Brulé, *La Grèce d’à côté* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007), pp. 313–32; R. Parker, ‘The problem of the Greek cult epithet’, *Opuscula Atheniensia* 28 (2003), pp. 173–83; Belayche et al., *Nommer les dieux*; Graf, this volume, Chapter 3.

29 For Aphrodite Areia see G. Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre: Figures d’Aphrodite en Grèce ancienne* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 18 (Liège: CIERGA, 2007), pp. 265–8.

30 R. Parker, ‘Artemis Ilithye et autres: le problème du nom divin utilisé come épiclese’, in Belayche et al., *Nommer les dieux*, pp. 219–26 at 219–20, 225.

characters by their names, epithets, cults, statues,<sup>31</sup> myths,<sup>32</sup> which create a divine unity whereas cult tends to diversity, and iconographies.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, in the course of time, from this motley collection of gods there rose a group of twelve Olympian gods, the Dodekatheon, who were seen as representative of the complete Greek pantheon,<sup>34</sup> even though each city pantheon had its own, slightly varying composition.<sup>35</sup> As Ian Rutherford (Chapter 2) persuasively argues, this Dodekatheon seems to recall the role of the twelve gods in Hittite religion via the twelve Titans, who almost certainly were derived from the Hittites.<sup>36</sup> But where and when did this development start? A hitherto neglected testimony lends further support to Rutherford's analysis and also allows us to be more specific. In his poem about the entry of Dionysos into the Olympos with the help of Hephaistos (Bremmer: Chapter 10), Alcaeus uses the expression 'one of the twelve' (349e Voigt/Liberman). This shows that around 600 BC the idea of a Dodekatheon was already prevalent on Lesbos, an island where Hittite influence is indeed in evidence.<sup>37</sup> Via Lesbos, and perhaps other Ionian islands, the idea of the Dodekatheon must have gradually spread to Athens and Olympia where it becomes visible around 500 BC. At around the same time we see the materialization of the concept of the hero as a class of supernatural beings between gods and men, even though some figures kept hovering

- 31 See more recently A. Larcher, 'Gemalte Götterstatuen: Ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie der pompejanischen Wandmalerei', in B. Otto and F. Ehrl (eds), *Echo: Festschrift J. B. Trentini* (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1990), pp. 197–208; B. Alroth, 'Changing modes in the representation of cult images', in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Iconography of Greek Cult in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (Athens and Liège: CIERGA, 1992), pp. 9–46; T. Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild* (Munich: Beck, 2000); S. Bettinetti, *La statua di culto nella pratica rituale greca* (Bari: Levante Editori, 2001); P. Linant de Bellefonds et al., 'Rites et activités realatifs aux image de culte', *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum II* (Los Angeles: Getty, 2004), pp. 417–507; Lapatin, this volume, Chapter 7.
- 32 For the contribution of myth to our knowledge of the nature of divinity see R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 145–51.
- 33 The standard work is *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* (Zurich: Artemis, 1981–99); see also D. Grassinger et al. (eds), *Die Rückkehr der Götter* (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2008).
- 34 K. Dowden, 'Olympian gods, Olympian pantheon', in D. Ogden (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 41–55.
- 35 V. Pirenne-Delforge (ed.), *Les Panthéons des cités des origines à la Périégèse de Pausanias* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 8 (Liège: CIERGA, 1998).
- 36 J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 77–8.
- 37 K. Tausend and S. Tausend, 'Lesbos: Zwischen Griechenland und Kleinasien', in R. Rollinger and B. Truschneegg (eds), *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), pp. 89–111; H. Mason, 'Hittite Lesbos?', in Collins et al., *Anatolian Interfaces*, pp. 57–62; Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture*, p. 317.

between the two categories, such as Herakles (Stafford: Chapter 12).<sup>38</sup> It is only at this moment, then, that the classic image of Greek religion with its gods, heroes and humans is fully in place.

I have started with this 'prehistory' of the Greek gods, as we hardly realize any more that no modern history of Greek religion contained such an overview before the appearance of Walter Burkert's history of Greek religion in 1977. But what did scholars make of the Greek gods in the twentieth century? To answer this question, and thus to situate this book in the historiography of the Greek gods,<sup>39</sup> I will take a brief look at the, arguably, best four histories of Greek religion from the twentieth century: those by Wilamowitz, Gernet, Nilsson and Burkert.

Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848–1931), the greatest Hellenist of modern times,<sup>40</sup> wrote an unfinished history of Greek religion in two volumes in the very last years of his life and died while correcting its proofs.<sup>41</sup> It was the synthesis of a life-long, ever more intensive study of Greek religion and mythology. Its first volume is wholly dedicated to the older gods until Homer,<sup>42</sup> but its scheme of pre-Hellenic, old-Hellenic and Homeric gods has become completely outdated through the decipherment of Linear B. Yet it remains a lasting insight that Greek religion is strictly local in character, even though it has only recently led to local histories of Greek religion.<sup>43</sup> In

38 As I have argued in Bremmer, 'The rise of the hero cult and the new Simonides', *ZPE* 158 (2007), pp. 15–26. The chronology has insufficiently been taken into account in recent studies of the hero cult; cf. H. van Wees, 'From kings to demigods: epic heroes and social change, c. 750–600 BC', in S. Deger-Jalkotzy and I. Lemos (eds), *Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 363–79; G. Ekroth, 'Heroes and hero-cults', in Ogden, *A Companion to Greek Religion*, pp. 100–14.

39 For a fuller picture see A. Henrichs, *Die Götter Griechenlands: Ihr Bild im Wandel der Religionswissenschaft* (Bamberg: C. C. Buchner, 1987) = H. Flashar (ed.), *Auseinandersetzungen mit der Antike* (Bamberg: C. C. Buchner, 1990), pp. 116–62.

40 In addition to the many articles and books, authored and edited, by W. M. Calder III on Wilamowitz, see R. L. Fowler, 'Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff', in W. W. Briggs and W. M. Calder III (eds), *Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Garland, 1990), pp. 489–522.

41 U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1931–2). For an excellent discussion of Wilamowitz as historian of Greek religion see A. Henrichs, '"Der Glaube der Hellenen": Religionsgeschichte als Glaubensbekenntnis und Kulturkritik', in W. M. Calder III et al. (eds), *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 262–305; see now also R. L. Fowler, 'Blood for the ghosts: Wilamowitz in Oxford', *Syllecta Classica* 20 (2009).

42 In the light of history one can only read with admiration his protest against the talk about 'Rassenreinheit' in ancient Greece; cf. Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, I, p. 50.

43 Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, I, pp. 46–7; see especially R. Parker, 'Spartan religion', in A. Powell (ed.), *Classical Sparta* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 142–72, and *Athenian Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); M. L. Zunino, *Hiera Messeniaka: La storia religiosa della Messenia dall'età micenea all'età ellenistica* (Udine: Forum, 1997).

the second volume Wilamowitz follows the further history of Greek religion, in which the Panhellenic gods receive a more than 250-page exposition, by far the largest in any of the modern histories, that culminates in Plato. It is rather striking to see that theology is fully incorporated into his narration, whereas the more recent histories, although paying attention to the religious role of poets and philosophers, never give the impression that this is seen as an important part of Greek religion. It is surely symbolic that both Nilsson and Burkert treat them towards the ends of their handbooks.<sup>44</sup> Naturally, Wilamowitz discussed authors like Lucian (Dickie: Chapter 17) and Pausanias (Pirenne-Delforge: Chapter 19), but he did not think of the novel (Dowden: Chapter 18) and hardly spent any time on late antique magic (Faraone: Chapter 20) and theurgy (Johnston: Chapter 21). He rejected Christianity (Auffarth: Chapter 24), but had intended to discuss the reasons for its victory. Unfortunately, his death prevented him from completing that part, and we have only a few jottings left which show how interesting this last chapter could have been.

Wilamowitz started his study with a long methodological chapter, which in several ways has a surprisingly modern ring. In its very first sentence, he already reacted against those that saw the Greek gods as unchangeable with fixed characters. That is why he used the expression *Die Götter sind da*, 'The gods are present' (that is, in the world of time and place), as a kind of refrain in his introduction.<sup>45</sup> This formulation may well have been in reaction to Walter F. Otto's (1874–1958) dictum *Die Götter sind*, 'The gods exist', as the latter's *Die Götter Griechenlands*, in which he presented the Greek gods as eternal and unchangeable beings, had appeared in 1929, the very year that Wilamowitz had started his own book.<sup>46</sup> Wilamowitz also

44 M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (Munich: Beck, 1955<sup>2</sup>), I, pp. 741–83; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 305–37.

45 Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, I, pp. 17–19, 23, 42. As Albert Henrichs (email, 2 June 2009) comments: 'What Wilamowitz tried to express is the fact that when seen with the eyes of a (cultural) historian Greek gods do not live on Olympus or in some kind of dream world or vacuum, but they exist in the historical here and now. The *da* in the German phrase is not the equivalent of the Greek *ekei*, "there", but conveys the sense of an identifiable presence. Like the German *die Götter sind da*, the version "the gods are there" can also be used in an unmarked sense as an equivalent of "the gods exist", but it could also mean in a marked sense that "the gods are (over) THERE", i.e. pointing to a specific locale that need not be too near to the speaker. The translation "the gods are present" would avoid that ambiguity.'

46 W. F. Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands: Das Bild des Göttlichen im Spiegel des griechischen Geistes* (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1929). For Otto see A. Stavru, 'Otto, Walter F.', in L. Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 10 (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2005<sup>2</sup>), pp. 6932–5; Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1. For the genesis of Otto's book see A. Stavru, 'Postfazione', in W. F. Otto, *Gli dèi della Grecia* (Milan: Adelphi, 2004<sup>2</sup>), pp. 309–25.



noted that contemporary historians of religions had little interest in the Olympian gods, just as they neglected the theological ideas of the Greek philosophers.<sup>47</sup> He rejected, like most historians of Greek religion today, the then current usage of the terms totem, tabu and mana.<sup>48</sup> He had an eye for gender and realized that ancient religion was especially a matter of group religion,<sup>49</sup> even though this insight was neglected in most of his book, as he concentrated on the individuals whose ideas we can trace, which necessarily means a neglect of the Greeks who did not belong to the select group of poets, philosophers, historians and other intellectuals.<sup>50</sup>

The term *Glaube* in the title shows that Wilamowitz very much saw Greek religion as he saw the Christianity which he had rejected but the vocabulary of which he frequently used, as when, in his words, Pheidias' statue of Zeus in Olympia (Barringer: Chapter 8) represents the god as *allmächtig*, 'omnipotent', and *allliebend*, 'omniloving'.<sup>51</sup> For Wilamowitz the gods only existed in so far as the Greeks believed in them, a belief that had to be continuously renewed. His stress on faith and feeling, *Glaube* and *Gefühl*, fitted a time in which the religious experience of the individual became ever more important,<sup>52</sup> but the concept of faith that is part of it is a relatively modern notion.<sup>53</sup> He even went so far as to claim that we had to learn to believe as the Greeks believed.<sup>54</sup> This stress on believing meant that, to a large extent, Wilamowitz neglected the cult of the gods, even though he was interested in the artistic representations of the gods; moreover, like many nineteenth-century scholars, he sharply separated mythology from

47 Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, I, pp. 10–11.

48 Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, I, pp. 10, 24. For the history of religion of his time see G. W. Stocking, Jr, *After Tylor* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); C. Pignato, *Totem mana tabù: Archeologia di concetti antropologici* (Rome: Meltemi, 2001), and H. G. Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

49 Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, I, pp. 13–14 (religion), 36 (gender).

50 Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, I, p. 36 ('die Verehrung der Götter Sache der Gemeinde'); cf. Henrichs, "'Die Glaube der Hellenen'", p. 297.

51 Wilamowitz, *Glaube*, II, pp. 172–3; cf. Henrichs, "'Der Glaube der Hellenen'", p. 292.

52 Cf. F. W. Graf, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter* (Munich: Beck, 2004), p. 171. This tendency may well have strengthened Wilamowitz's reliance on K. O. Müller's and Welcker's vocabulary, cf. Henrichs, "'Der Glaube der Hellenen'", pp. 291–3.

53 The rise of the terms *foi*, *croissance*, *faith*, *belief* and *Glaube* in the modern European languages is still very much a *terra incognita*; cf. J. Wirth, 'La naissance du concept de croyance (XIIe–XVIIe siècles)', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 44.1 (1983), pp. 7–58; S. G. Hall et al., 'Glaube IV–VI', in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 13 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1984), pp. 305–65; E. Seebold, 'Liebe und Glaube', *Incontri linguistici* 26 (2003), pp. 145–57.

54 Henrichs, "'Der Glaube der Hellenen'", p. 295.

religion,<sup>55</sup> despite the former's importance for a better knowledge of the gods. In the end, his book is mostly out of date, even if it remains an inexhaustible treasury of notes, suggestions, source criticism and observations that are the fruit of his long and intimate knowledge of Greek culture, from Homer to late antiquity.<sup>56</sup>

At the very moment that Wilamowitz was writing his history of Greek religion, the same was being done by a Frenchman, Louis Gernet (1882–1962),<sup>57</sup> who was a pupil of Durkheim and not particularly interested in the gods.<sup>58</sup> In his account of 300 pages the gods receive only about 30 pages,<sup>59</sup> and instead of being in the centre of his book, as in Wilamowitz, the gods appear only around page 200. Gernet starts with a discussion of the minor divinities, such as personifications of the earth (Ge), the sun (Helios), the Winds,<sup>60</sup> love (Eros),<sup>61</sup> but also groups of goddesses, such as the nymphs.<sup>62</sup> After a

55 For the rise of the concept of religion, together with the denigration of mythology, in modern times see J. N. Bremmer, "Religion", "ritual" and the opposition "sacred vs. profane": notes towards a terminological "genealogy", in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Festschrift für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1998), pp. 9–32 at 10–14.

56 Fowler, 'Wilamowitz', p. 510.

57 For Gernet see S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 76–106, 283–7 ('The work of Louis Gernet'), and, on a much better documentary basis, R. di Donato, *Per una antropologia storica del mondo antico* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1990), pp. 1–130 ('L'antropologia storica di Louis Gernet').

58 L. Gernet and A. Boulanger, *Le génie grec dans la religion* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1932). Gernet wrote the most perceptive review of Wilamowitz; see his *Les Grecs sans miracle* (Paris: La Découverte, 1983), pp. 104–15 (1934<sup>1</sup>). However, he rated other German historians of Greek religion higher: 'on ne aurait le [Wilamowitz] mettre en parallèle avec un Usener ou un Dieterich, voire avec un Rohde' (p. 105).

59 Gernet, *Le génie grec*, pp. 204–13, 221–41. It is typical that there is no chapter on the gods in any of his three volumes with collected articles, except for a review of the book on Dionysos (1951) by his friend Henri Jeanmaire (1894–1960): L. Gernet, *L'Anthropologie de la Grèce antique* (Paris: François Maspero, 1968), pp. 63–89; note also his review of Otto's *Die Götter Griechenlands* in *Revue de Philologie* 57 (1931), pp. 91–4.

60 For the worship of the Winds see A. Sacconi, 'Anemoi', *SMSR* 35 (1964), pp. 137–59; R. Hampe, *Kult der Winde in Athen und Kreta*, SB Heidelberg, Philos.-hist. Kl. 1967.1 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1967); K. Neuser, *Anemoi: Studien zur Darstellung der Winde und Windgottheiten in der Antike* (Rome: Bretschneider, 1982).

61 For divine personifications and allegorizations see H. A. Shapiro, *Personifications in Greek Art: The Representation of Abstract Concepts 600–400 BC* (Zurich: Akanthus 1993); E. J. Stafford, *Worshipping Virtues: Personification and the Divine in Ancient Greece* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2000); B. Borg, *Der Logos des Mythos: Allegorien und Personifikationen in der frühen griechischen Kunst* (Munich: Fink, 2002).

62 Nymphs: M. Halm-Tisserant and G. Siebert, 'Nympha I', in *LIMC* 8.1 (1997), pp. 891–902; J. Larson, *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

section on the heroes, in which he was much more interested, Gernet continued with the major gods, even though he noticed that it is not easy to say what a god is.<sup>63</sup> This is certainly true: even though all gods are equally god, some are more god than others. Some have a cult, others not; some an extensive mythology, others virtually none; some many epithets, others a few or none, and so on. This leads Gernet to the argument that a god is a *système de notions*.

In this system Gernet attaches great weight to the names and epithets of the divinities in their cults, as they help to personalize them. But it is their powers that make them into real gods, and not smaller supernatural beings, even though the coherence of those powers is complex and often hard to see for us, as must have been the case for the Greeks. Gods are not limited to their local cult: there is always a kind of divine surplus, so to speak. Moreover, there is a kind of general quality that remains the same over many centuries: Dionysos who gives the wine, Artemis who helps in childbirth, Hera who presides over the marriage. It is this interaction between the local and the 'global' that makes it so hard to formulate what a god is.

Gernet does not discuss the individual gods, but he does pay attention to Zeus, whose power is exalted by poets such as Pindar and Aeschylus (Seaford: Chapter 9) but whose presence in cult is highly limited. In the end, polytheism does not favour a strict organization and there is always something unstable about the pantheon. The gods are there, but they do not really play a very active role in the world. They are more the symbolic guarantees of the social and physical order than active agents in our daily life (but see Fowler: Chapter 15).

We enter a different world with the 1941 history of Greek religion by Martin Nilsson (1874–1967), the leading authority in Greek religion during the middle third of the twentieth century.<sup>64</sup> His text, 'that masterpiece of patient brilliance',<sup>65</sup> was basically written at the end of the 1930s, and the second edition of 1955 is updated rather than revised in certain minor respects.<sup>66</sup> Unlike Wilamowitz and

63 Gernet, *Le génie*, p. 222: 'il n'est pas très facile de dire ce que c'est qu'un dieu'.

64 On Nilsson see J. Mejer, 'Martin P. Nilsson', in Briggs and Calder, *Classical Scholarship*, pp. 335–40; A. Bierl and W. M. Calder III, 'Instinct against proof: the correspondence between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Martin P. Nilsson on *Religionsgeschichte* (1920–1930)', *Eranos* 89 (1991), pp. 73–99, reprinted in W. M. Calder III, *Further Letters of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1994), pp. 151–78.

65 A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and Its Hellenistic Background* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. xiii.

66 M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 2 vols: I (Munich: Beck, 1941<sup>1</sup>, 1955<sup>2</sup>, 1967<sup>3</sup>), II (Munich: Beck, 1950<sup>1</sup>, 1961<sup>2</sup>). I quote from the second edition of the first volume, the last edition to be revised by Nilsson himself.

Gernet, Nilsson had fully accepted the approaches to the history of religion current around 1900. This meant that he concentrated on ritual instead of on mythology, but also accepted the evolutionistic and comparative approach of Tylor, Frazer and others.<sup>67</sup> Cult was the most important part of Greek religion for Nilsson. As in Gernet's study, the major gods appear therefore relatively late in his *Geschichte*, only on page 385. And like Gernet, Nilsson starts with the *niederen göttlichen Wesen*, 'lower divine beings', such as centaurs, river gods, nymphs and Muses.<sup>68</sup> After these, he first discusses Minoan, Mycenaean<sup>69</sup> and Homeric religion before coming to the major gods. In Nilsson's opinion, the Homeric gods belonged more to the Mycenaean than to later times. Moreover, the poets had made the gods human, all too human, so that they could not be real gods.<sup>70</sup> That is why the Homeric *Götterapparat* is of less importance for the study of Greek religion.<sup>71</sup> This is not an entirely happy disposition, as it misjudges the importance of Homer for the understanding of the Greek gods. It is precisely their playfulness but also whimsicality that is part of the Greek divine figure,<sup>72</sup> however much philosophers objected to it (Trépanier: Chapter 14).

Nilsson starts his discussion of the major gods with a few preliminary observations in which he argues that rites are now much more important than myths. Their archaic character enables us to recognize the meaning of a divinity in older times. In addition to the major gods, there were the smaller ones, who were, according to Nilsson, much closer to the people than were the major ones, who were closer to the aristocracy. Among the gods Nilsson distinguished the older ones from the younger ones, whom he put in second place. Admittedly some of these were clearly younger, such as Aphrodite and Apollo (above), but others, such as Ares and Dionysos, have now been shown to be just as old as Zeus and Hera, whereas, on the other hand, Kronos with his Titans is not old at all (above). In short, the distinction is not helpful.

67 See Nilsson's interesting *Forschungsgeschichte*, which also clearly shows his own sympathies: *Geschichte*, I, pp. 3–13. For the 'ritual turn' see Bremmer, "'Religion'", "ritual", pp. 14–24.

68 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, pp. 216–55.

69 Unlike Wilamowitz, Nilsson was an adept of the current theories on race; cf. *Geschichte*, I, p. 355: 'Es darf aber nie vergessen werden, dass die Minoer und die Mykenäer zwei rasseverschiedene Völker waren, und das setzt auch eine Verschiedenheit ihrer Religionen voraus'.

70 For Homer's anthropomorphism see now W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften I: Homerica* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2001), pp. 80–94.

71 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, p. 286–374.

72 For this playfulness see W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften II: Orientalia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2003), pp. 96–118.

In his discussion of individual gods, Nilsson impresses by his complete mastery of the literary, epigraphical, iconographical and archaeological material. I do not think that there has been another historian of Greek religion with such a wide knowledge of all available sources. Yet knowledge is no guarantee for insight. This becomes immediately apparent when we look at Nilsson's discussion of Zeus. Although he objected to the nature mythology of his youth, Nilsson did not escape its influence and promoted Zeus into a weather god, who as such has his throne in heaven or on a mountain. Here we already see things go wrong. All the gods lived in heaven (above), which does not make them all weather gods, and the mountains of his cults often served as a symbolic centre of a region.<sup>73</sup> To turn all Greeks into rain-hungry peasants undoubtedly reduces the power and stature of Zeus. Moreover, rain is now also invoked to explain the myth of the Golden Fleece because Hellen and Phrixos' mother is called Nephele, 'Cloud', just as the reported human sacrifice to Zeus Lykaeos in Arcadia with the concomitant transformation of a youth into a werewolf is explained as *Regenzauber*, 'rain magic'.<sup>74</sup> Given the postulated connection with rain, it is not surprising that, subsequently, Nilsson turned Zeus also into a fertility god.<sup>75</sup>

Nilsson had a happier hand in Zeus Herkeios, 'of the fence', a god so important that every Athenian candidate for an archonship was asked whether he had an Apollo Patroos and a Zeus Herkeios (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 55.3). Nilsson clearly could identify with this protector of the farm and the house, but he had less attention for the fact that this Zeus is also the protector of the family as a social group.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, he rightly associated Zeus Ktesios with the acquisition of property and its preservation. He also extensively discusses the god's representation as a snake, whereas Robert Parker just mentions it: Nilsson was clearly more content with the thought of a theriomorphic god than the present generation of scholars.<sup>77</sup> Zeus Meilichios

73 For Zeus, weather and mountains see R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 30–3.

74 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, pp. 396–401. For the Golden Fleece and the werewolf see Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture*, pp. 303–38 ('The Myth of the Golden Fleece'), and Bremmer, 'Myth and ritual in Greek human sacrifice: Lykaon, Polyxena and the case of the Rhodian criminal', in J. N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), pp. 55–79 at 65–78, respectively.

75 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, pp. 401–2, but note R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 416: 'Zeus' involvement with agriculture is not very marked'.

76 Parker, *Polytheism*, pp. 16–18.

77 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, pp. 403–6, cf. Parker, *Polytheism*, pp. 15f.

is another manifestation of Zeus that was connected with wealth and also represented as a snake. But once again Nilsson had no eye for the fact that this Zeus was worshipped not only by individuals but also by groups below the level of the polis, such as demes and families; in fact, 'the god is especially concerned with bloodshed committed both against the family and by the family'.<sup>78</sup> Nilsson also postulates, if on tenuous grounds, a snake form for Zeus Soter, once again a god that was closely connected with the political life of the community. This is recognized by Nilsson, but it is the much less prominent side of the god as protector of the house that he emphasizes.<sup>79</sup>

It is after these specific Zeuses, so to speak, that Nilsson discusses Zeus in general as the protector of the moral, social and political order. It is here that he mentions other epithets that point to Zeus' connection with politics, such as Boulaios and Polieus, or social groups: Patroios, Phratris and Apatourios;<sup>80</sup> his association with suppliants, also noted by Nilsson, cannot be separated from Zeus' protection of families.<sup>81</sup> It is only at the end of his discussion of Zeus that he mentions Zeus' connection with divination,<sup>82</sup> both as god of signs, especially in Homer, and as god of the important oracle of Dodona. The order is understandable, even if the connection is not immediately transparent. Can it be that divination was seen as one way to create order in the confusion of everyday life?

I have chosen Zeus as an example of Nilsson's approach because he dedicated the greatest number of pages to this god, but also because his analysis enables us to see best Nilsson's qualities and prejudices. Of all the modern authors of a history of Greek religion he is the one who draws upon the greatest variety of sources with an unequalled knowledge of all areas of Greek life. Yet at the same time, he is also still very much a product of the later nineteenth century with its interest in nature, ritual and fertility. In his introduction Nilsson explicitly rejects Durkheim, and it is surely symbolic that immediately after this rejection Nilsson mentions the importance of the invention of agriculture; his comment that Gernet stresses the sociological points of view will have hardly been meant as a compliment.<sup>83</sup> Yet it is the sociological approach that allows us to connect the worship of the

78 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, pp. 411–14. For an excellent study of the god see M. Jameson et al., *A Lex Sacra from Selinous* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1993), pp. 81–103, at 103.

79 F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome: Schweizerisches Institut, 1985), pp. 181–3; Parker, *Athenian Religion*, pp. 238–41.

80 Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 32–3 (Patroios, Phratris), 176 (Boulaios).

81 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, p. 419, cf. Jameson, *A Lex Sacra from Selinous*, p. 119.

82 See also Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 203–4 (Zeus Phemios).

83 Nilsson, *Geschichte*, I, pp. 63–4 (Durkheim), 67 (Gernet).

gods with specific groups and communities. It is in this respect that modern scholarship has perhaps made most progress in its study of the gods.<sup>84</sup>

Like Nilsson, Walter Burkert (b. 1931) prioritized ritual above the gods, who appear only on page 191 in his 1977 handbook of Greek archaic and classical religion.<sup>85</sup> Yet we enter a whole new phase in the study of the gods. Whereas the nineteenth century debated the priority of monotheism over polytheism or vice versa (Konaris: Chapter 25), Burkert's handbook of Greek religion is the first to look at polytheism as a system with its own characteristics.<sup>86</sup> Yet the first scholar to do so was Jean-Pierre Vernant (1914–2007).<sup>87</sup> Taking his inspiration from the work of Georges Dumézil (1898–1986), Vernant and his school stressed that 'the pantheon is a system, of which we should study the structures instead of concentrating on divinities as individuals. Which gods are paired and which are opposed to each other? What is the precise mode of intervention? What logic governs their being?'<sup>88</sup> Burkert does not really follow this model.<sup>89</sup> In line with his love for biology, he prefers to look at the Olympians as a family, which they of course also were, a mode of organizing the pantheon that perhaps went back to Indo-European times.<sup>90</sup> Within this family Burkert looks at the archetypal married couple Zeus–Hera and the brother–sister pair Apollo–Artemis, but also at the tensions between the old and the young, the Titans and the generation of Zeus. Yet the family model only goes so far, as it does not explain, for example, the antagonism between Apollo and Poseidon or the coupling of Poseidon and

84 Fine examples of this approach are Robert Parker's books *Athenian Religion* and *Polytheism*.

85 W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1977). I quote from the 1985 English translation: Burkert, *Greek Religion*. On Burkert see F. Graf, 'Kultur als Macht und Schutzmacht: Zum wissenschaftlichen Werk von Walter Burkert', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 26–7 January 1991; Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1, n. 27.

86 Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 216–25.

87 On Vernant see di Donato, *Per una antropologia*, pp. 209–44; A. Laks, 'Les origines de Jean-Pierre Vernant', *Critique* 612 (1998), pp. 268–82; A. Paradiso, 'Jean-Pierre Vernant', *Belfagor* 56 (2001), pp. 287–306.

88 As summarized by J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998<sup>2</sup>, reprinted Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 15. Vernant first exposed his views in 1966; cf. Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: François Maspero, 1974), pp. 103–20 ('La société des dieux'); for more bibliography see Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1, n. 21.

89 For a critique of this model see also Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1.

90 W. Euler, 'Gab es eine indogermanische Götterfamilie', in W. Meid (ed.), *Studien zum indogermanischen Wortschatz* (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1987), pp. 35–56; West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 191–4.

Demeter in many places.<sup>91</sup> The family model also does not explain why Athena Hippia invents the bridle and the bit, whereas Poseidon Hippios dominates the horse: here the Vernant model with its stress on different modes of divine intervention is more helpful.<sup>92</sup>

On the other hand, Vernant himself never delivered on his own concept<sup>93</sup> – in fact, it is still unclear what kind of ‘system’ we should be looking for. As we noted, the pattern of an Olympian ‘family’ of gods related by kinship is clearly not sufficient, but the sociological approach to Greek religion has not yet shed any light on the ‘systemic’ aspects of Greek polytheism either. The most promising way for exploring cultic connections and interrelationships between gods is probably the study of regional cults, but until now not enough regional pantheons have been explored to draw more general inferences on a Panhellenic scale. Yet, in the end, the polyvalent nature of the Greek gods and their historical developments will always oppose an all too strictly ‘systemic’ analysis.<sup>94</sup>

Moreover, neither Burkert nor Vernant has broached the problem of the hierarchy in the pantheon. Which gods are more important, why and how do we know? This is of course a complicated question, but it is clear that Artemis, for example, was more important than Hephaistos or Themis. Here we have to look at the location of sanctuaries, the nature of the sacrifices (Georgoudi: Chapter 5), the myths, the iconography and the divine relationship to the social and political order. It is also important to realize that the Greek gods are not just persons. In fact, the cerebral Frenchman Vernant has even denied that the Greek gods were persons, whereas the Romantic German Burkert sees them as ‘human almost to the last detail’.<sup>95</sup> However, ‘power’ and

91 Burkert, *Structure and History*, pp. 127–8; Bremmer, “‘Effigies Dei’ in ancient Greece: Poseidon”, in D. v. d. Plas (ed.), *Effigies Dei: Essays on the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 35–41.

92 See the exemplary investigation of J.-P. Vernant and M. Detienne, *Les ruses d'intelligence* (Paris: Flammarion, 1974), pp. 178–202. For a fine recent example of this approach see A. Klöckner, ‘Hera und Demeter – Die Mütter’, in Grassinger et al., *Die Rückkehr der Götter*, pp. 128–37.

93 See the discussions of Artemis and Dionysos in J.-P. Vernant, *Figures, idoles, masques* (Paris: Julliard, 1990), pp. 137–246, and *Mortals and Immortals*, ed. F. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 195–257. The same is true for his followers: L. Bruit Zaidman and P. Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*, tr. P. Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 176–214.

94 See the excellent observations of A. Bendlin, ‘Nicht der Eine, nicht die Vielen: Zur Pragmatik religiösen Verhaltens in einer polytheistischen Gesellschaft am Beispiel Roms’, in R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann (eds), *Götterbilder, Gottesbilder, Weltbilder*, 2 vols (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), II, pp. 279–311 at 280–8.

95 Vernant, *Mythe et société*, p. 109: ‘Les dieux grecs sont des puissances, non des personnes’; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 183.



‘person’ are two sides of the Greek divinities, which can come to the fore at different times and in different contexts. When Athena defeats Poseidon in a contest for Attica, the gods are represented as persons by authors and artisans, but an Athenian would not have failed to notice also that ‘intelligence’ defeats ‘brute power’. There is often an abstract quality to the Greek gods, which must have made it easier to divinize and personalize abstract qualities and allegories, such as Themis, Dike, Eirene and Demokratia.<sup>96</sup>

In his analysis of the Greek pantheon, Burkert not only works with the family model, but also applies the Olympian–Chthonian opposition, that is opposing the heavenly gods to those who belong to the earth; moreover, with the latter he combines the category of the heroes and the semi-gods Herakles, the Dioskouroi and Asklepios. This organization is hardly satisfactory. The distinction between Olympian and chthonic gods has been crumbling for a while now, as it is increasingly realized that this is a late antique categorization, which, at least in its extreme form, hardly finds support in the literary and archaeological sources.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the category of the heroes does not derive from the worship of the dead *tout court*: at this point, Burkert is clearly still influenced by older ideas that liked to stress the worship and fear of the dead as an important factor in the origin of the hero cult.<sup>98</sup> The ideal organization of the pantheon has not yet been found.

Finally, in his often brilliant analyses of the individual gods Burkert can build on previous collections of material, but has the advantage of the decipherment of Linear B as well as the progress in new texts and archaeological excavations of the decades since Nilsson wrote his handbook. Yet his own ‘voice’ is often very audible in these investigations. There is now much attention to the prehistory of the gods. For example, in the case of Artemis we hear of her as ‘Mistress of Animals’ and as goddess of hunting and hunters, a theme dear to Burkert’s heart. Moreover, he now pays full attention to her ties with Asia Minor, where she later developed into a city goddess (Petrovic: Chapter 11), the Near Eastern influence on Greek religion being another favourite theme of his.<sup>99</sup> The then relatively new category of initiation is also adduced to interpret Artemis’ supervision of girls

96 For the divine pecking order see Bremmer, *Greek Religion*, pp. 15–23.

97 R. Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), pp. 21–32; R. Hägg and B. Allroth (eds), *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 2005).

98 Bremmer, ‘The rise of the hero cult’.

99 For a preliminary balanced assessment of Burkert’s results in this respect see G. Casadio, ‘Ex oriente lux?’, in C. Riedweg (ed.), *Grecia Maggiore: Intrecci culturali con l’Asia nel periodo arcaico* (Rome: Istituto Svizzero di Roma, 2008), pp. 122–60.

at the brink of adulthood. In addition, the complicated relationship of some divinities with heroes or heroines (Calame: Chapter 13), as of Artemis with Iphigeneia,<sup>100</sup> is, less persuasively, explained on the basis of sacrifice, another favourite theme of Burkert. In other words, his is in many ways also a very personal, sometimes idiosyncratic approach.

It is time to come to a close. It has been a long road since the Renaissance rediscovered the Greek gods.<sup>101</sup> Looking back over the twentieth century we begin to realize how different the approaches have been and how much there still is to do. Just to mention one more topic that deserves more attention than it has received in this volume: gender. Why did so many more Greek males receive theophoric names, such as Apollonios or Herodotos, than did women?<sup>102</sup> And what can votive reliefs (Klößner: Chapter 6) and other artistic representations tell us about the differences in worship between men and women?<sup>103</sup> It is not difficult to think up other questions. One of these would be the problem of ruler cult and its relationship to the worship of the gods (Erskine: Epilogue). Burkert ends his handbook with a study of Plato's *Laws*, which means that he does not discuss the hymn that the Athenians composed for Demetrios Poliorketes. In this hymn the Macedonian king is pictured as 'present, joyous as befits the god, beautiful and smiling'.<sup>104</sup> There are of course other, more frightening images of the Greek gods. Yet it seems fair to say that is their appealing qualities that have always attracted the interest of lay people and scholars alike. The twentieth century wrestled with the nature of these often so elusive gods. We may have come somewhat closer to understanding them, but there can be little doubt that in this respect there is still much to do in the twenty-first century.

100 For the myth of Iphigeneia see Bremmer, 'Sacrificing a child in ancient Greece: the case of Iphigeneia', in E. Noort and E. J. C. Tigchelaar (eds), *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 21–43; G. Ekroth, 'Inventing Iphigeneia? On Euripides and the cultic construction of Brauron', *Kernos* 16 (2003), pp. 59–118; Calame, this volume, Chapter 13.

101 M. Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

102 For a good modern start in this field see R. Parker, 'Theophoric names and the history of Greek religion', in S. Hornblower and E. Matthews (eds), *Greek Personal Names: Their Value as Evidence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 53–79.

103 See also O. Borgers, 'Religious citizenship in classical Athens: men and women in religious representations on Athenian vase-painting', *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 83 (2008), pp. 73–97.

104 For the hymn see most recently A. Henrichs, 'Demythologizing the past, mythicizing the present: myth, history, and the supernatural at the dawn of the Hellenistic period', in R. Buxton (ed.), *From Myth to Reason?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 223–48 at 243–7.

# WHAT IS A GREEK GOD?

*Albert Henrichs*

The title of this chapter poses a fundamental question that demands an answer. Different answers are conceivable, and which one we get depends on whom we ask. If we could go back in time and put the question to an ordinary Greek from the classical period, he might tell us that ‘I know one when I see one’, thus relying on his own inner certainty and experience of seeing gods in dreams or waking visions. In fact, ‘seeing the gods’ is one of the most ubiquitously attested forms of divine–human interaction in antiquity.<sup>1</sup> Yet if we asked another, more cautious, Greek, he might play it safe and say with Homer: ‘Gods are dangerous when they manifest themselves clearly’ (χαλεποὶ δὲ θεοὶ φαίνεσθαι ἐναργεῖς, *Iliad* 20.131).<sup>2</sup>

In fact, a remarkable answer to our question has survived from the third century AD. It can be found in a hexametrical oracle of the Klarian Apollo inscribed on an altar carved into one of the walls of the city of Oinoanda in northern Lycia<sup>3</sup>:

I am grateful to Jan Bremmer and Sarah Nolan for their comments.

- 1 R. Lane Fox, ‘Seeing the gods’, in *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), pp. 102–67, 700–11.
- 2 Or does the verse suggest that gods are ‘difficult’ to recognize when they appear to mortals? On the ambivalent connotations of χαλεποὶ in this passage and in *Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 111 (χαλεποὶ δὲ θεοὶ θνητοῖσιν ὁρᾶσθαι) see N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 185–6. W. Burkert, ‘From epiphany to cult statue: early Greek *theos*’, in A. B. Lloyd (ed.), *What is a God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity* (London: Duckworth, 1997), pp. 15–34 at 21, paraphrases ‘gods may even be dangerous and are difficult to behold’.
- 3 *SEG* 27 (1977), no. 933. The Oinoanda oracle was first published by G. E. Bean in 1971. See H. W. Parke, *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 164–9; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 168–77, 190–4; S. Mitchell, ‘The cult of Theos Hypsistos between pagans, Jews, and Christians’, in P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (eds), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 81–148 at 81–92; A. Busine, *Paroles d’Apollon: Pratiques et traditions oraculaires dans l’Antiquité tardive (IIe–VIe siècles)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 35–40, 447 no. 15, cf. 456 no. 85 (below, n. 10);

αὐτοφυής, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος,  
 οὖνομα μὴ χωρῶν, πολώνυμος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων,  
 τοῦτο θεός· μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μέρις ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς.

‘Self-engendered, untaught, without mother, unshakeable,  
 admitting of no name, with many names, dwelling in fire –  
 this is god. We are but a small portion of god, (his) messengers.’

This pagan oracle offers an elaborate theological answer to the question, first raised by Pindar, ‘*What* is god?’ (fr. 140d Snell/Maehler τί θεός;). The neuter pronoun in the phrase τοῦτο θεός reflects a concern with precise definition as well as a tendency to replace the concept of a personal god with a more abstract notion of divinity.<sup>4</sup> The god envisaged here is an unnamed transcendent deity who is identified with the ethereal fire. Aloof and mysterious, he is described in hymnic style with a series of praise words inspired by negative theology and culminating in a pair of opposites that simultaneously emphasize the god’s ineffability and the abundance of his names.<sup>5</sup> By asking ‘What is god?’ rather than ‘Who is (a) god?’, the oracle looks beyond the individual gods and offers a more universal, Platonizing definition of divinity. Despite their elevated tone, the epithets that characterize the highest god are conventional and have parallels in Orphic hymns, magical papyri and several other theological oracles.<sup>6</sup> Apollo, the putative source of these hexameters, explains the gods of popular belief, himself included, collectively as emanations of

(footnote 3 *continued*)

C. Oesterheld, *Göttliche Botschaften für zweifelnde Menschen: Pragmatik und Orientierungsleistung der Apollon-Orakel von Klaros und Didyma in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2008), pp. 574 no. 25, 603.

- 4 For the use of the neuter pronoun in questions about the nature of god see below, n. 10, and Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.22.60 *roges me quid aut quale sit deus*. On the theology and style of the so-called ‘theological oracles’ from Klaros, Didyma and the *Tübingen Theosophy*, including the Oinoanda oracle, see most recently J. L. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 38–44, 536–7.
- 5 A comparable early Christian example of negative theology combined with polar predication seems to have gone unnoticed: Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.5.39 = Kerygma Petrou fr. 2a Dobschütz (first half of second century AD) ὁ ἀόρατος, ὃς τὰ πάντα ὁρᾷ, ἀχώρητος, ὃς τὰ πάντα χωρεῖ, ἀνεπίδεῖς, οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐπιδέεται καὶ δι’ ὃν ἔστιν, ἀκατάληπτος, ἀέναντος, ἄφθαρτος, ἀποίητος, ὃς τὰ πάντα ἐποίησεν λόγῳ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ (‘the invisible, who sees all things; uncontained, who contains all; needing nothing, of whom all things stand in need, and thanks to whom they exist; incomprehensible, everlasting, indestructible, unmade, who made all things by the word of his power’). Cf. D. Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain: Peeters, 1995), pp. 229–32 on negative theology in Clement; Carabine ignores the theological oracles, including the one from Oinoanda.
- 6 L. Robert, ‘Un oracle gravé à Oinoanda’ (1971), in *Opera Minora Selecta V* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1989), pp. 617–39, at 610–14.

the supreme being and as his ‘messengers’ (*angeloi*), a term that had a familiar ring for Jews and Christians alike.<sup>7</sup> To describe these ‘angels’ as ‘a small portion of god’ is not as far-fetched as it sounds. Some seven centuries before the Oinoanda oracle Diogenes of Apollonia used an almost identical phrase to characterize the affinity of the human mind to the divine.<sup>8</sup> By the imperial period, the notion that humans are ‘a portion of god’ had become a commonplace in philosophical circles.<sup>9</sup>

A fuller version of the Klarian oracle was incorporated much later into a Christian collection of pagan theological texts with the title *Theosophia* (‘Divine Wisdom’).<sup>10</sup> By giving a ‘theosophic’ answer to the question ‘What is god?’, the author of the oracle acts like a quintessential θεολόγος. For more than a century, ‘theology’ has been considered a bad word by historians of Greek religion reacting to its Christian connotations. But θεολογία is in origin a perfectly good pagan word that first appears in Plato and that has a long history in later Platonism.<sup>11</sup> The basic meaning of the word is ‘talking about the gods/god’, λέγειν περὶ θεῶν. Clearly this kind of talk – that is, verbalized reflections on the ‘nature’ of divinity, περὶ φύσεως θεῶν or *de natura deorum* – is a

7 Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon*, pp. 208–9.

8 Theophr. *Sens.* 42 = Diogenes of Apollonia 64 A 19 p. 56.3 DK ὁ ἐντὸς αἰῆς αἰσθάνεται μικρὸν ὧν μέρος τοῦ θεοῦ (‘the air within us [= the soul] has perception because it is a small portion of god’). Cf. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 319.

9 Epict. *Diatr.* 2.8.9 σὺ ἀπόσπασμα εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ· ἔχεις τι ἐν σεαυτῷ μέρος ἐκείνου (‘you are a detached part of god; you have in yourself a certain portion of god’).

10 Preserved in the *Theosophia Tubingensis* 13.106–8, ed. H. Erbse, *Theosophorum Graecorum fragmenta* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1995), pp. 8–9; cf. Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon*, p. 456 no. 85, and Oesterheld, *Göttliche Botschaften*, p. 575 no. 26. The three hexameters defining the divine essence are also quoted by Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.7 (*Paroles d'Apollon*, p. 456 no. 80, *Göttliche Botschaften*, p. 575 no. 27), who reports the question addressed to the Klarian Apollo as ‘Who at all or what is god?’ (*quis esset aut quid esset omnino deus*). On the Tübingen *Theosophy* (late seventh century) and its relationship to the lost *Theosophia* (c. AD 500) see Lightfoot, *Sibylline Oracles*, pp. 39, 105–6.

11 Pl. *Resp.* 379a6 περὶ θεολογίας, cf. Empedokles 131.4 DK ἀμφὶ θεῶν . . . λόγον. Philolaos 44 B 14 DK is the earliest attestation of θεολόγος, whether or not the fragment is genuine (W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972], p. 249 with n. 47). Theology thrived in later Platonism; Proklos wrote a *Theologia Platonica* (Περὶ τῆς κατὰ Πλάτωνα θεολογίας) as well as an *Institutio theologica* (Στοιχείωσις θεολογική), and Marsilio Ficino is the author of a Latin *Theologia Platonica*. Cf. M. Bordt, *Platons Theologie* (Freiburg and Munich: Karl Alber, 2006); M. Abbate, *Il divino tra unità e molteplicità: saggio sulla Teologia Platonica di Proclo* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2008); M. J. B. Allen et al. (eds), *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). The title of one of the chapters in Abbate’s book is a Platonizing appropriation of Thales’ dictum (below, n. 14), and a testimony to its polyvalence: ‘Il “Tutto” è pieno di dèi; dagli dèi ipercosmici agli dèi encosmici’.

mode of speech that came naturally to the Greeks and that found expression in various forms of poetry, especially hymns, long before the gods became the subject of philosophical discourse.<sup>12</sup>

The first Greek philosophers, the so-called Presocratics, were without exception interested in the divine and contributed to the ongoing Greek ‘talk about the gods’.<sup>13</sup> What is arguably the earliest of these theological utterances consists of three words that convey the most succinct and poignant definition of Greek polytheism that has come down from antiquity: πάντα πλήρη θεῶν – ‘everything is full of gods’.<sup>14</sup> Ascribed by Aristotle to Thales, the earliest Greek philosopher, the phrase effectively encapsulates one of the most defining features of Greek religion – the fact that the Greeks were polytheists who recognized and worshipped a plurality of gods, something they shared with the overwhelming majority of Mediterranean religions and cultures. The dictum also implies the physical, indeed epiphanic, omnipresence and ubiquity of the divine in all its manifestations, whether Thales’ gods are to be understood as the gods of traditional belief, as I am about to suggest, or as divine beings of a different order, that is, individual souls or a universal life-force, as Plato and Aristotle thought.<sup>15</sup>

12 Ancient treatises titled Περί θεῶν (cf. Cicero’s *De natura deorum*) are abundantly attested, but modern discussions of the shared characteristics of Greek gods are hard to find.

13 W. Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* = The Gifford Lectures 1936 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947); T. M. Robinson, ‘Presocratic theology’, in P. Curd and D. W. Graham (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 485–98. On theology as an integral branch of Greek philosophy see S. Broadie, ‘Rational theology’, in A. A. Long (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 205–24; D. Frede and A. Laks (eds), *Traditions of Theology: Studies in Hellenistic Theology, Its Background and Aftermath* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); P. Meijer, *Stoic Theology: Proofs for the Existence of the Cosmic God and of the Traditional Gods, Including a Commentary on Cleanthes’ Hymn on Zeus* (Delft: Eburon, 2007).

14 11 A 22 DK as quoted by Arist. *De an.* 1.5, 411a8, who takes it as a possible reference to the cosmic soul (note his ἴσως, ‘perhaps’). The authenticity, intended meaning and exact wording of the dictum ascribed to Thales are far from certain. Plato cites it without attribution and with inverted word order (*Leg.* 10.899b8 θεῶν εἶναι πλήρη πάντα, cf. *Epin.* 991d4 θεῶν εἶναι πάντα πλεῖα). According to Aët. *Plac.* 1.7.11 = 11 A 23 DK, Thales held ‘that the All is both animate and full of daimons’ (τὸ δὲ πᾶν ἐμψυχον ἅμα καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρες). Representative discussions include Jaeger, *Theology*, pp. 21–2 and 198–9 n. 10; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 65–6; G. S. Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983<sup>2</sup>), pp. 95–8. A monotheistic version of the dictum (‘Everything is full of god’, πάντα θεοῦ πλήρη) is embedded in one of the theological oracles found in the *Tübingen Theosophy* and in other texts from late antiquity; see *Theosoph. Tübing.* 43.365 Erbse (above, n. 10).

15 In the wake of Plato and Aristotle (preceding note), animistic readings of πάντα πλήρη θεῶν are popular. See R. J. Hankinson, ‘Reason, cause and explanation in

The majority of modern interpreters believes that, in Werner Jaeger's words, the saying ascribed to Thales 'cannot refer to those gods with which the imaginative faith of the Greeks peopled mountain and stream, tree and spring, any more than to the inhabitants of Heaven or Olympus of whom we read in Homer'.<sup>16</sup> It is hard to see which gods the author of our dictum might have had in mind once the Olympian gods are excluded along with the deified aspects of nature.<sup>17</sup> Jaeger himself understood Thales' gods as 'mysterious living forces' while admitting that 'we know nothing of Thales' concept of God'.<sup>18</sup> In the Greek polytheistic system, the number of gods is potentially infinite; it includes the conventional gods as well as any 'new gods' along with the less tangible gods envisaged by the philosophers.<sup>19</sup> I find it hard to believe that a statement that maximizes the number of gods as well as their omnipresence would exclude the most accepted categories of gods from consideration. Far from reducing Thales' gods to a cosmic principle or turning them into 'mysterious forces', I take 'everything is full of gods' as an emphatic assertion of Greek polytheism in the fullest sense of the word.<sup>20</sup>

At this point some reflections on Greek polytheism and its treatment in modern scholarship are in order.<sup>21</sup> After all, Greek polytheism

Presocratic philosophy', in Curd and Graham, *Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, pp. 434–57 at 443, who relates Thales' assertion to 'the dynamism in the world', more specifically to 'this sort of pan-psychism (if such it is)'.

16 Jaeger, *Theology*, pp. 21–2.

17 On the latter see J. Larson, 'A land full of gods: nature deities in Greek religion', in D. Ogden (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 56–70.

18 Jaeger, *Theology*, p. 199, who is echoed by Robinson, 'Presocratic theology', p. 485 ('powerful life-principle').

19 New gods: R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 152–98; W. Allan, 'Religious syncretism: the new gods of Greek tragedy', *HSCP* 102 (2004), pp. 113–55. On the gods of the philosophers see above, nn. 11 and 13.

20 Against the prevailing animistic reading of Thales' dictum, Gregory Frost-Arnold offers a decidedly polytheistic and 'Hesiodic' interpretation, with which I agree in principle (see his unpublished paper 'On Thales' "all things are full of gods"', at <http://faculty.unlv.edu/frostarn/ThalesFull.pdf>).

21 For various (re)constructions of Greek polytheism as a 'system' of interrelationships and interactions among multiple divinities see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 216–25; J.-P. Vernant, 'Greek religion, ancient religions' (1975), in *Mortals and Immortals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 269–89; M. Detienne, ch. IX in M. Detienne and G. Sissa, *La vie quotidienne des dieux grecs* (Paris: Hachette, 1989), pp. 159–264; L. Bruit Zaidman and P. Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 176–214; F. Graf, 'Griechische Religion', in H.-G. Nesselrath (ed.), *Einleitung in die griechische Philologie* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1997), pp. 456–504 at 495–500; J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, with addenda, 1999<sup>2</sup>), pp. 11–26; R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford:

is nothing but the sum total of all the Greek gods and their worship, and any attempt to define Greek divinity must take into account the distinctions between Greek polytheism and non-Greek forms of polytheism.<sup>22</sup> Like ‘theology’, polytheism was a taboo word for scholars of Greek religion until very recently. Already before the nineteenth century the term had acquired decidedly negative connotations that smacked of primitive cultures and comparative anthropology. The politically correct word for the sum total of divine worship in the Greek world continues to be ‘religion’, a Latin term of Protean versatility that has remained remarkably uncontroversial through the centuries and that creates a safe buffer between the polytheism practised by the Greeks and the monotheistic propensities of its modern students.<sup>23</sup> In a signal acknowledgement of the most distinctive feature of Greek religion, its polytheism, Robert Parker rehabilitated the proscribed word by giving it a prominent place in the title of his most recent book.<sup>24</sup>

Before we can attempt to give our own answer to the question ‘What is a Greek god?’ we need to address another prejudice, which Jan Bremmer touches upon in his introduction to this volume when he mentions the general neglect of the Greek gods in the modern scholarship on Greek religion.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, for over a hundred years scholars have paid infinitely more attention to cult and rituals than to the

(footnote 21 *continued*)

Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 387–95; P. Brulé, *La Grèce d'à côté* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007), pp. 313–81. On the modern reception of Greek polytheism since Nietzsche see A. Henrichs, ‘Götterdämmerung und Götterglanz: Griechischer Polytheismus seit 1872’, in B. Seidensticker and M. Vöhler (eds), *Urgeschichten der Moderne: Die Antike im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2001), pp. 1–19, and “‘Full of gods’: Nietzsche on Greek polytheism and culture”, in P. Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity: His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 114–37.

22 B. Gladigow, ‘Polytheismus’, in H. Cancik et al. (eds), *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe IV* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998), pp. 321–30.

23 On the problem of nomenclature in the study of what the Greeks called τὰ τῶν θεῶν (‘matters concerning the gods’) see R. Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte: Anthropologie der Antike seit 1800* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), pp. 145–6; J. N. Bremmer, “‘Religion’, “ritual” and the opposition “sacred vs. profane”: notes towards a terminological “genealogy”, in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1998), pp. 9–32. As has often been pointed out, Greek lacks a proper term for ‘religion’ other than ‘piety’ (εὐσεβεία) and ‘worship’ (θρησκεία).

24 Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*. The term is gaining acceptance. An international workshop on ‘Polytheism in Practice’ took place at Athens in November 2008 under the aegis of the Swedish Institute. See below, n. 78.

25 On the paradigm shift from gods to rituals see Henrichs, ‘Götterdämmerung und Götterglanz’; M. Konaris, this volume, Chapter 25.



Greek gods. The neglect of the gods and the privileging of rituals over the gods reflect a preference for the human participants in their actual social and historical settings.<sup>26</sup> Eminent scholars of Greek religion who can be described as ‘ritualists’ of one sort or another form a close line of succession from the late nineteenth century to the present day. They include Hermann Usener (1834–1905) and his followers, Jane Harrison (1850–1928), Eric R. Dodds (1893–1979) and Walter Burkert (b. 1931) among others.<sup>27</sup> Nobody can deny the central importance of ritual for Greek religion and culture. Animal sacrifice with its complex roots in the human struggle for survival and with its shabby treatment of the gods is a conspicuous case in point.<sup>28</sup>

- 26 Recent works on Greek religion with a distinct emphasis on social structures and social history include Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (1992); Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (1996), and *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (2005).
- 27 On Usener see J. N. Bremmer, ‘Hermann Usener’, in W. W. Briggs and W. M. Calder III (eds), *Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Garland, 1990), pp. 462–78; R. Schlesier, ‘“Arbeiter in Useners Weinberg”: Anthropologie und antike Religionsgeschichte in Deutschland nach dem ersten Weltkrieg’, in *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte*, pp. 193–241. On Harrison see Schlesier, ‘Die extravagante Ritualistin von Cambridge: Jane Ellen Harrison’, *ibid.*, pp. 123–44, and ‘Prolegomena zu Jane Harrisons Deutung der antiken griechischen Religion’, *ibid.*, pp. 15–192. On Dodds see E. R. Dodds, *Missing Persons: An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). On Burkert see R. W. Cape and W. Burkert, ‘An interview with Walter Burkert’, *Favonius* 2 (1988), pp. 41–52; W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften I: Homericum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2001), pp. 233–59; A. Henrichs, ‘Dromena und Legomena: Zum rituellen Selbstverständnis der Griechen’, in Graf, *Ansichten griechischer Rituale*, pp. 33–71 at 63–68. The papers of the ‘Author’s Colloquium with Walter Burkert’ (Universität Bielefeld, 22–4 November, 2007) will be published shortly in the series *MythosEikonPoesis*: A. Bierl and W. Braungart (eds), *Gewalt und Opfer: Im Dialog mit Walter Burkert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010).
- 28 On the practice and ideology of the sacrificial killing of animals in ancient Greece see most recently J. N. Bremmer, ‘Greek normative animal sacrifice’, in Ogden, *A Companion to Greek Religion*, pp. 132–44; M.-Z. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 32–116; V. Mehl and P. Brulé (eds), *Le sacrifice antique: Vestiges, procédures et stratégies* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008); Georgoudi, this volume, Chapter 5. Because of its central role in Greek culture, animal sacrifice looms large in contemporary discussions of Greek religion. In 2007 and 2008 alone, four international conferences were devoted to animal and human sacrifice in ancient Mediterranean and other cultures, with emphasis on Greece: Sarah Hitch and Ian Rutherford (organizers), ‘Violent commensality: animal sacrifice and its discourses in the ancient world’, University of Reading, 11 May 2007; Chris Faraone, Bruce Lincoln and Fred Naiden, ‘The centrality of animal sacrifice in ancient Greek religion: ancient reality or modern construct?’, University of Chicago, 11–13 April 2008; Renaud Gagné, ‘Representations of human sacrifice: Greece, China and Mesoamerica’, McGill University, 8 November 2008; Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, ‘What the gods demand: blood sacrifice in Mediterranean antiquity’, Boston University, 19–21 November 2008. A case of overkill?

As has often been observed, what people *do* in pursuit of their religious beliefs is more consistent over time and more indicative of social realities than what they *say*.<sup>29</sup> Yet for the Greeks themselves, the rituals they performed were mere corollaries of their belief in the existence and power of the gods. In their eyes, it was their gods more than their rituals that formed the cornerstone of their religion. From a Greek point of view, the gods not only existed prior to the rituals practised in their honour but were regarded as the ultimate *raison d'être* for these rituals. Indeed, Greek texts and vase paintings represent gods like Apollo, Artemis or Hermes engaged in ritual performance as 'first inventors' and as archetypal performers of rituals such as libation and animal sacrifice, and thus as divine role models for the human practitioners.<sup>30</sup> The dominant modern view is the exact opposite. For modern ritualists and indeed for most students of Greek religion in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, rituals are social agendas that are in conception and origin prior to the gods, who are regarded as mere human constructs that have no reality outside the religious belief system that created them. The answer that a Jane Harrison might have given to the question 'What is a god?' would reflect her belief in the absolute priority of ritual – Greek gods were for her personified projections of rituals.<sup>31</sup> Under such a definition, the divinity becomes identical with the ritual, and loses his or her distinct identity.

The modern tendency to separate Greek rituals from the gods and to treat them as self-contained manifestations of social realities finds a measure of support in some Greek rituals that lack a specific divine recipient or referent. But as the abundant religious record of the Greeks shows, and as some of the chapters in this volume confirm, most rituals of Greek religion are intimately connected with specific gods. It is neither practical nor advisable to study the two entities separately. Still, ritual continues to be privileged over the gods in the contemporary study of Greek religion, in part because of the pervasive influence of the work of Walter Burkert, who has done infinitely more for our understanding of Greek ritual than for that of the Greek gods. But it is not only the preoccupation with ritual that has displaced interest in the gods. Other constraints apply and further limit the extent to which Greek gods are studied. Whenever they do receive full attention, they tend to be studied individually

29 Henrichs, 'Dromena und Legomena'.

30 K. C. Patton, *Religion of the Gods: Ritual, Paradox, and Reflexivity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), esp. pp. 3–180.

31 Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte*, pp. 145–92 at 185.

rather than collectively or generically. This explains why books and articles on individual gods such as Zeus, Athena or Dionysos and their function in Greek culture abound, whereas systematic studies of Greek polytheism or of the cultural specificity of Greek notions of divinity are nowhere to be found.<sup>32</sup>

Again, what is a Greek god? An answer that points us in the right direction can be found in a famous passage from Herodotus in which the historian of the Persian Wars once again exhibits his profound awareness of religious phenomena.<sup>33</sup> In his comparison of Greek and Egyptian gods he considers Homer and Hesiod instrumental in the formation of the Greek pantheon (2.53.2):

ὅθεν δὲ ἐγένετο ἕκαστος τῶν θεῶν, εἴτε δὴ αἰεὶ ἦσαν πάντες, ὁκοῖοι τέ τινες τὰ εἶδεα, οὐκ ἠπιστέατο μέχρι οὗ πρόωγν τε καὶ χθὲς ὥς εἰπεῖν λόγῳ. Ἡσίοδον γάρ καὶ Ὅμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι δοκέω μέο πρεσβυτέρους γενέσθαι καὶ οὐ πλέοσι· οὗτοι δὲ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἑλλήσι καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες καὶ τιμὰς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες καὶ εἶδεα αὐτῶν σημῆναντες.

‘However, it was only the day before yesterday, so to speak, that the Greeks came to know whence each of the gods originated, whether all of them had always existed, and what they were like in their visible forms. For I take it that Homer and Hesiod lived no more than four hundred years before my time. They are the poets who composed a theogony for the Greeks and gave the gods their names and epithets, distinguished their honours and functions, and indicated their visible forms.’

According to Herodotus, it was Homer and Hesiod who created the Greek pantheon single-handedly and assigned distinct properties to each of the Olympian gods, thereby recognizing them as individuals

32 See most recently K. Dowden (*Zeus* 2006); R. Seaford, *Dionysos* (2006); S. Deacy, *Athena* (2008); F. Graf, *Apollo* (2009). All four books appeared in the same series, ‘Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World’ (London and New York: Routledge). The series as a whole is a stark reminder of the widespread tendency to study the Greek gods individually and in isolation from one another, as if they had lived separate ‘lives’ that entitled them to their own biographies. For a critique of this and other trends in the modern study of Greek polytheism see A. Henrichs, *Die Götter Griechenlands: Ihr Bild im Wandel der Religionswissenschaft* (Bamberg: C. C. Buchner, 1987), repr. in H. Flashar (ed.), *Auseinandersetzungen mit der Antike* (Bamberg: C. C. Buchner, 1990), pp. 115–62.

33 See W. Burkert, ‘Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen’ (1990), in *Kleine Schriften VII: Tragica et Historica* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2007), pp. 140–60.

in their own right.<sup>34</sup> Needless to say, the origins of the Greek gods are infinitely more complex than Herodotus could possibly have imagined, and the Homeric gods are not the sole product of poetic imagination, as Hartmut Erbse thought.<sup>35</sup> But the characteristics which the Homeric and Hesiodic epics attribute to the gods are external. They identify the gods as individuals but neither define nor explain their divinity; in fact they take it for granted. They tell us who is who among the gods, but they do not reveal what it is that makes a god a god.

Like Herodotus, the vast majority of modern students of Greek religion have embraced what anthropologists describe as an 'etic' rather than an 'emic' viewpoint; in other words, they comment on Greek religion as outsiders who are neither part of that culture nor particularly partial to it and who do not share its belief system.<sup>36</sup> Unlike the Greeks themselves, scholars who engage in the study of the Greek gods today are with few exceptions monotheists. It is fair to say that polytheism in any of its past or present forms is intrinsically alien to them. Whether they are Jews, Christians or agnostics, they are by definition reluctant to identify with Greek attitudes towards the divine and instead adopt conventional standards of scholarly objectivity that require a considerable inner distance from the object of their study. Scholars like Walter F. Otto (1874–1958) in Germany and the Hungarian-born Karl Kerényi (1879–1973), who shared a belief in the experienced presence of the Greek gods, deliberately ignored these rules and tried to identify in more intimate ways with the religiosity of the Greeks and with their gods.<sup>37</sup> Such scholars have always been the exception. Otto and

34 On the Panhellenic associations of this passage and its implications for Herodotus as a 'historian of religions' see W. Burkert, 'Herodot über die Namen der Götter: Polytheismus als historisches Problem' (1985), in *Kleine Schriften VII*, pp. 161–72; G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 215–17 and 261–2.

35 H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zur Funktion der Götter im homerischen Epos* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1986). For a fascinating Homeric theology based on a strictly 'Iliadic' reading of the Olympian pantheon see G. Sissa in *La vie quotidienne des dieux grecs*, pp. 25–155.

36 T. N. Headland et al. (eds), *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990); J. W. Lett, 'Emic/etic distinctions', in D. Levinson and M. Ember (eds), *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology III* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), pp. 382–83; A. Barnard, 'Emic and etic', in A. Barnard and J. Spencer (eds), *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 180–3.

37 Representative samples of their work on the Greek gods include W. F. Otto, *Theophrastus: Der Geist der altgriechischen Religion* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956), and K. Kerényi, *Antike Religion* (Munich: Langen Müller 1971, reissued Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995). On W. F. Otto: J. Donnerberg, 'Die Götterlehre Walter Friedrich Ottos: Weg oder Irrweg moderner Religionsgeschichte?' (dissertation, Innsbruck, 1961); H. Cancik, *Antik, Modern: Beiträge zur römischen und deutschen Kulturgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998), pp. 139–86; Henrichs, *Die Götter*

Kerényi in particular had to pay a high price for their unorthodoxy. To this day, they are not taken seriously, and understandably so. I am in no hurry to come to their rescue, but their legacy does serve as a reminder that ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ methodologies produce vastly different insights into Greek culture and especially Greek religion.

I can think of three divine properties that set gods apart from mortals and define their divinity, namely immortality, anthropomorphism and power.<sup>38</sup> Immortality and divine power are closely linked like cause and effect. If gods were subject to death, their power would be finite and limited by their mortality. Paradoxically, though, Greek gods are often portrayed as if they had to prove their divinity by exercising their supernatural power (ἀρετή) through acts of miraculous intervention.<sup>39</sup> The notion of anthropomorphic gods is not a necessary prerequisite for divine immortality or power. In fact the anthropomorphism of the Greek gods makes their divinity a challenge for mortals while it offers great opportunities for the immortals themselves. Ironically, the human form which the Greeks shared with their gods often served as a reminder of the distance that separated mortals and immortals. To the extent that Greek gods seem to look like mortals, they are indistinguishable from them, but numerous myths tell of occasions when this external resemblance turned out to be deceptive. After some reflections on the first two properties, I conclude with a brief discussion of the third.

### 1 IMMORTALITY

First and foremost, Greek gods are immortal (ἄθᾶνατοι or αἰὲν ἑόντες).<sup>40</sup> Immortality is the ultimate benchmark of their divinity.

*Griechenlands*, pp. 139–41; O. Leege, ‘Dionysos in der modernen Religionsgeschichte’, in R. Schlesier and A. Schwarzmaier (eds), *Dionysos: Verwandlung und Ekstase* (Berlin and Regensburg: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin/Schnell und Steiner, 2008), pp. 133–41 at 137–40. On K. Kerényi: R. Schlesier and R. S. Martínez (eds), *Neuhumanismus und Anthropologie des griechischen Mythos: Karl Kerényi im europäischen Kontext des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Locarno: Rezzonico Editore, 2006).

38 See A. Henrichs, ‘“He has a god in him”: human and divine in the modern perception of Dionysus’, in T. H. Carpenter and C. A. Faraone (eds), *Masks of Dionysus* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 13–43 at 18–21, where I examine the specific divinity of Dionysos with the help of the same three criteria. For a comparative perspective see L. R. Farnell, *The Attributes of God = The Gifford Lectures 1924–5* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925).

39 On aretology as a genre and its status in the scholarship of the last hundred years see A. Henrichs, ‘Der antike Roman: Kerényi und die Folgen’, in *Neuhumanismus und Anthropologie des griechischen Mythos*, pp. 57–70, at 64–6.

40 Both epithets are Homeric (e. g. *Il.* 1.290, 520); cf. J. Strauss Clay, ‘Immortal and ageless forever’, *Classical Journal* 77 (1981/2), pp. 112–17. On the nexus between divine immortality and corporeality see Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals*, pp. 27–49.

Subject to reproduction and birth but exempt from death, the gods worshipped by the Greeks are imperishable but not eternal, unlike the Judaeo-Christian creator god or the supreme being of later Platonists. Differently put, Greek gods have a beginning but no end. Hesiod explains their origins in his *Theogony*, which embeds the concept of divine generation in its title. Gods who suffer and die, such as Dionysos Zagreus, are rare exceptions to the Homeric rule that immortality defined as exemption from death is a prerequisite for divinity.<sup>41</sup> Typically, however, dying gods like Osiris (whose fate served as a model for the Zagreus myth) and Adonis come back to life and ultimately confirm the principle of divine immortality.<sup>42</sup>

Modern preoccupation with the immortality of the soul and thus with the divine element in mortals far outweighs interest in the immortality of the gods, whose deathlessness is usually taken for granted without further discussion by students of Greek religion.<sup>43</sup> The same pattern obtained in antiquity. Whereas numerous Greek philosophers and church fathers discuss the immortality of the soul, few ancient texts dwell on immortality as a defining feature of Greek divinity. Two exceptions from drama, one from comedy and the other from tragedy, come to mind. In the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes, an impostor rises to speak in the Athenian assembly. When asked by the Herald to identify himself, he gives his name as Amphytheos (46), which literally means that he is descended from divine ancestry on his father's and his mother's side.<sup>44</sup> He rattles off a bogus Eleusinian genealogy, in which he traces his lineage back to Demeter and Triptolemos to support his claim, 'I am immortal' (51 ἄθνατος εἰμί, cf. 47 and 53). Amphytheos' claim is false, and his purported genealogy is a joke. The scene is so hilarious that it must have left the audience rolling with laughter, but it confirms that immortality was the defining quality of divinity, and inseparable from it.

A comparable construction of divinity, albeit in a more tragic vein,

41 The controversy over the origin and meaning of the Zagreus myth continues unabated, with no resolution in sight. The earliest text that mentions the dismemberment and the rebirth (ἀνεβίω) of Dionysos Zagreus is Phld., *Piet.* 4957–70 Obbink = Orph. 59 I Bernabé, on which see A. Henrichs, 'Philodemos De Pietate als mythographische Quelle', *Cronache Ercolanesi* 5 (1975), pp. 5–38 at 34–8. On Dionysos as a 'suffering god' in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and elsewhere see Henrichs, "'He has a god in him'", pp. 26–9.

42 B. Gladigow, 'Gottesvorstellungen', in H. Cancik et al. (eds), *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe* III (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993), pp. 32–49 at 42.

43 W. Jaeger, 'The Greek ideas of immortality', *HThR* 52 (1959), pp. 135–47, is typical in his exclusive concern with what he calls 'the immortality of man'.

44 The comic coinage ἀμφίθεος is modelled on ἀμφιθαλής ('with both parents alive'), a term often used in the context of ritual; see F. R. Adrados (ed.), *Diccionario griego-español* II (Madrid: Instituto 'Antonio de Nebrija', 1986), p. 214.

can be found in the closing scene of Sophocles' *Philoktetes*, in which Herakles appears as a *deus ex machina* to break the stalemate that resulted from Philoktetes' indecision (1409ff.). Herakles introduces himself as an Olympian god who has acquired immortal distinction (1420 ἀθάνατον ἀρετήν) through hard work and toil (1419 πόνος). In fact most Greek gods were hard at work to justify their existence and prove their divinity.<sup>45</sup> Herakles' existential status is notoriously ambivalent, and he can be seen as the archetype of the human aspiration to shed one's own mortality and to become immortal. The Sophoclean Herakles appears as a fully fledged god who lives on Olympos and rubs shoulders with Zeus. In Euripides, Herakles doesn't know whether he is human or divine.<sup>46</sup> Outside tragedy, in actual cult, sacrifices are offered to Herakles both 'as to a god' (ὡς θεῷ) and 'as to a hero' (ὡς ἥρωι).<sup>47</sup> Whereas gods are immortal, heroes are not. In fact having died and being a corpse is the most basic prerequisite for obtaining the status of a cult hero.<sup>48</sup>

Immortality can be an ambivalent category that was already interpreted loosely in antiquity and that has created even more confusion among modern scholars. Strictly speaking, immortality means freedom from death, but the term is often used in a much diluted sense as a reference to an eternal afterlife, that is, a life after death. In 1921, Lewis Farnell published a book with the paradoxical and contradictory title *Greek Hero Cult and Ideas of Immortality*.<sup>49</sup> The title belies the fact that cult heroes are by definition dead and hardly in a position to inspire 'ideas of immortality'. Around the middle of the fifth century BC, tomb epigrams for the first time propagated the notion that after death the body goes into earth and the soul becomes immortal and soars to the upper air (*aithēr*).<sup>50</sup> Euripides echoes this sentiment in

45 R. Parker, 'Gods at work', in *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, pp. 387–451; A. Henrichs, 'Gods in action: the poetics of divine performance in the *Hymns* of Callimachus', in A. Harder et al. (eds), *Callimachus* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1993), pp. 127–47.

46 Eur. *HF* 1258–65.

47 E. Stafford, 'Herakles between gods and heroes' (this volume, Chapter 12). R. Parker, 'ὡς ἥρωι ἐναγίζειν', in R. Hägg and B. Alroth (eds), *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian* (Stockholm: Paul Åström, 2005), pp. 37–45; A. Henrichs, "'Sacrifice as to the immortals": modern classifications of animal sacrifice and ritual distinctions in the *Lex Sacra* from Selinous', *ibid.*, pp. 47–60.

48 See A. Henrichs, 'The tomb of Aias and the prospect of hero cult in Sophokles', *Cl Ant* 12 (1993), pp. 165–80.

49 Farnell's title served as the model for D. Lyons, *Gender and Immortality: Heroines in Ancient Greek Myth and Cult* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

50 The principal text is *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1179 = *CEG* I no. 10 Hansen, lines 5–6 (Athens, war memorial for the casualties at Poteidaia, 432 BC). See J. N. Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 7 and

several of his plays,<sup>51</sup> and it often gets confused in modern scholarship with true immortality, which is the privilege of the gods.

## 2 ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Xenophanes' trenchant criticism of the Homeric gods is based on the premise that the gods are human constructs who were created by humans in their own image.<sup>52</sup> Human notions of the divine, he argues famously, vary from culture to culture and reflect each culture's self-image. If oxen or horses had hands and could draw with them like humans, they would represent their gods in their own animal shape.<sup>53</sup> The supreme being he envisages, 'the greatest among gods and humans', is all eyes, ears and mind – 'unlike mortals in body or in thought'.<sup>54</sup> In myth as well as cult Greek gods could assume non-human shapes and appear as animals, for instance as lions, bulls, horses, bears, birds or snakes.<sup>55</sup> But the cases in which gods adopt a theriomorphic form are negligible compared to the overwhelming number of instances in which they appear in human shape.<sup>56</sup>

Like every other quality of the gods, their anthropomorphism could be problematized if doing so suited a particular text or context. In myth and literature, male and female gods sometimes deceive mortals by assuming anthropomorphic identities which are not their

(footnote 50 *continued*)

137 n. 62 (list of relevant inscriptions); W. Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 112.

51 Eur. *Supp.* 531–6, *Erechtheus* fr. 370.67–72 Kannicht, *Hel.* 1013–6, *Chrysippos* fr. 839.8–14 Kannicht, *Phoen.* 808–11, *Or.* 1186–8.

52 Xenophanes 21 B 11–12, 14, 16 DK. Cf. Jaeger, *Theology*, pp. 38–54, 208–15; Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, pp. 168–72, 179–80; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 308–9.

53 Xenophanes 21 B 15 DK.

54 Xenophanes 21 B 23–4 DK.

55 On Greek gods appearing in animal shape see R. Buxton, 'Metamorphoses of gods into animals and humans', this volume, Chapter 4; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 64. On Jane Harrison's fetishistic fascination with theriomorphic manifestations of divinity see Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte*, pp. 166–70. With few exceptions (e. g. Dionysos' bovine epiphanies), divine theriomorphism is a feature of myth rather than cult. On Wilamowitz's life-long aversion to Asklepios as a snake god see A. Henrichs, "'Der Glaube der Hellenen": Religionsgeschichte als Glaubensbekenntnis und Kulturkritik', in W. M. Calder III et al. (eds), *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt, 1985), pp. 263–305 at 298–301.

56 On the anthropomorphism of the Greek gods see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 182–9 and 'Homer's anthropomorphism: narrative and ritual' (1991), in *Kleine Schriften I*, pp. 80–94. For anthropomorphic qualities of divinity in comparative perspective see Gladigow, 'Gottesvorstellungen', pp. 40–4.



own. Athena in the *Odyssey*, the Demeter of the *Homeric Hymn* and Dionysos in the *Bacchae* are conspicuous cases of divinities in disguise.<sup>57</sup> On the positive side, the anthropomorphism of the gods had two closely related cultic consequences. The tangible physical presence implicit in the human form enabled the Greeks to 'see' and recognize their gods, thus making the concept of divine epiphany possible; by the same token, the epiphanic experience must have been instrumental in the creation of the earliest Greek cult images, as has been argued by Walter Burkert and others.<sup>58</sup> But once a particular deity became iconographically identified with his or her cult image, the relationship between god and image was reversed; as a result gods were often believed to make their epiphanies in the likeness of their statues.<sup>59</sup>

Epiphany is the physical manifestation of a divinity to a mortal, either in a dream or in a waking vision.<sup>60</sup> Without the anthropomorphic gods, the Greek epiphanic experience would be very different; indeed, it might not exist at all. The numerous accounts of visual encounters between gods and mortals illustrate how an intrinsically passive divine quality – anthropomorphism – can result in powerful modes of interaction between the two. This visual mode of reciprocity is reflected in the standard terminology of sight that can be found throughout the epiphanic record. As I have argued elsewhere in greater detail, epiphany is a matter of seeing and being seen, of φαίνεσθαι and

57 For Homeric examples see H. J. Rose, 'Divine disguisings', *HTThR* 49 (1956), pp. 63–72.

58 Burkert, 'From epiphany to cult statue'; S. Bettinetti, *La statua di culto nella pratica rituale greca* (Bari: Levanti Editori, 2001), pp. 118–24; B. Gladigow, 'Epiphanie, Statuette, Kultbild: Griechische Gottesvorstellungen im Wechsel von Kontext und Medium' (1990), in *Religionswissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), pp. 73–84; K. Lapatin, this volume, Chapter 7.

59 B. Gladigow, 'Präsenz der Bilder – Präsenz der Götter: Kultbilder und Bilder der Götter in der griechischen Religion' (1986), in *Religionswissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft*, pp. 62–72; H. S. Versnel, 'What did ancient man see when he saw a god? Some reflections on Greco-Roman epiphany', in D. van der Plas (ed.), *Effigies Dei: Essays on the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 42–55 at 46–7; T. S. Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild: Untersuchungen zur Funktion griechischer Kultbilder in Religion und Politik* (Munich: Beck, 2000), pp. 35–43, 115–30; V. Platt, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

60 A. Henrichs, 'Epiphany', *OCD*<sup>3</sup> (1996), p. 546. See further Lane Fox, 'Seeing the gods'; N. Marinatos and D. Shanzer (eds), *Divine Epiphanies in the Ancient World*, special issue, *ICS* 29 (2004); J. N. Bremmer, 'Close encounters of the third kind: Heliodorus in the Temple and Paul on the road to Damascus', in *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 215–33 (with additional bibliography).

ιδεῖν.<sup>61</sup> When Athena comes down from heaven in the first book of the *Iliad*, she manifests herself to Achilles alone (οἷοι φαinoμένη) – nobody else sees her (τῶν δ' ἄλλων οὐ τις ὁρᾷτο) – until he recognizes (ἔγνω) the goddess.<sup>62</sup> Epiphany thus becomes a litmus test for divinity, and at the same time an opportunity to put one's divinity to effective use.

It is important to remember that 'epiphany' is not merely or predominantly a literary device found in various genres of Greek literature from epic to tragedy and beyond, but even more so a real-life event that numerous Greeks of all periods claim to have experienced in the open air or in their sleep. In his pioneering work *The Greeks and the Irrational*, E. R. Dodds distinguishes between dream visions and waking visions of divine beings.<sup>63</sup> The latter category includes the encounters with individual gods that are conventionally referred to as 'epiphanies'. Yet as Henk Versnel has pointed out, the evidence from cult, which is mainly found on inscriptions, 'does not allow us to draw a clear distinction between epiphany "proper" and dream visions'.<sup>64</sup> Some distinctions are discernible, however, at least as far as the Greek terminology is concerned. One of the earliest cultic attestations of a divine epiphany, and the only one epigraphically known from Athens, can be found on an inscription of the mid-fourth century BC from the Athenian Acropolis: 'Meneia made this dedication to Athena after seeing the miraculous power of the goddess in a dream' (Ἀθηνάαι Μένεια ἀνέθηκεν ὅπνιν ἰδοῦσα ἀρετὴν τῆς θεοῦ).<sup>65</sup> Athena is the deity who appears most frequently on the tragic stage, at least in the extant plays. In fact, dream epiphanies of Athena must have been so common in Athens that in Aristophanes' *Knights* Kleon's alias Paphlagon could claim that 'the goddess herself' (ἡ θεὸς αὐτῇ) had appeared to him in a dream.<sup>66</sup> Nothing further is known about Meneia or her epiphanic episode, but the nature of her vision emerges from her use of the formulaic phrase *opsin idousa*, which occurs in inscriptions from the Asklepieion in Epidauros as well as the temple of Athena on Lindos and is used

61 A. Henrichs, 'To see and be seen: the poetics of sight in Greek encounters with the divine' (paper presented at Yale University on 25 March 2008). Cf. R. A. Prier, *Thauma Idesthai: The Phenomenology of Sight and Appearance in Archaic Greece* (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989).

62 *Il.* 1.194–200. See D. Turkeltaub, 'Perceiving Iliadic gods', *HSCPh* 103 (2007), pp. 51–81.

63 E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), pp. 102–34.

64 Versnel, 'What did ancient man see when he saw a god?', p. 48.

65 *IG II/III*<sup>2</sup> 4326 = *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 3.1151. On aretology see above, n. 39.

66 *Ar. Equ.* 1090–1 ἄλλ' ἐγὼ εἶδον ὄναρ, καὶ μοῦδόκει ἡ θεὸς αὐτῇ / τοῦ δήμου καταχεῖν ἀρκατῆν πλουθυγίαν.

numerous times by Herodotus as a technical term for dream visions of supernatural beings.<sup>67</sup>

Questions about its credibility attach to every single text recording an epiphany, a dream vision or a similar person-to-person encounter with the divine. By definition, questions of this nature do not admit of plausible answers, in part because modern scholars do not believe in the existence of the Greek pantheon or in the power and efficacy of its gods. Authenticity, historicity and credibility are fundamental criteria for truth and truthfulness, but they are intrinsically inapplicable to a belief system that promotes personal encounters with the divine in the form of epiphanies. As Walter Burkert remarked with reference to divine epiphanies in Minoan religion: 'Epiphany occurs in imagination.'<sup>68</sup> This is of course the etical view of an outsider; the view from within the culture was different.<sup>69</sup>

### 3 POWER

The most ubiquitous quality that defines a Greek god is divine power (δύναμις).<sup>70</sup> Of all the divine qualities, it is by far the hardest to define, in part because it does not manifest itself in the abstract and because its concrete manifestations can take so many different forms. Like most other religions, including all Mediterranean religions, Greek religion imagines its gods as powerful by definition.<sup>71</sup> As a generic attribute divine power is inevitably taken for granted, not explained. I am not aware of any aetiological myth that tells us why the gods are so powerful. But powerful they are, and their power is neither impaired by disease or death nor constrained by anything other than the limitations imposed on their own efficacy by their individual spheres of influence or by the one divine agency that has the power to control the other gods including Zeus, namely Moira.<sup>72</sup>

67 *IG IV* 1<sup>2</sup>, 121 (healing records from Epidauros, fourth century BC), 10f., 15f., 25, 37, 49, 57 ἐγκαθεύδων/-δουσα/ἐγκατακοιμαθεῖσα ὄπνιν εἶδε, 118 ἔφα ὄπνιν ἰδεῖν, 76 ἐγκαθεύδοντι οὖν αὐτῶι ὄπνις ἐφάνη; Lindian Temple Chronicle, 99 BC (*FGrH* 532, section D, dream epiphanies of Athena) 16f. ὁ δὲ τὰν ὄπνιν ἰδὼν, 107 ἰδὼν τὰν ὄπνιν; Hdt. 1.39.1, 1.108.1, 1.201.1, 2.139.1–2, 3.30.2, 3.124.1–2, 5.55.1, 6.107.1, 6.118.1 and 6.131.2.

68 Burkert, 'From epiphany to cult statue', p. 27.

69 A. Henrichs, 'Horaz als Aretaloge des Dionysos: *credite posteri*', *HSCP* 82 (1978), pp. 203–11, on Hor. *Carm.* 2.19.1 *Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus / vidi docentem*.

70 H. W. Pleket, 'Divine omnipotence', in H. S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 171–83.

71 On 'Macht der Götter' in general see B. Gladigow, 'Macht', in Cancik et al., *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe IV*, pp. 68–77 at 75–6.

72 A. Henrichs, 'Moira', *Der neue Pauly* 8 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), pp. 340–3.

Within each god's individual sphere of influence, his or her power is unchallenged and absolute. As Aphrodite puts it in the prologue to Euripides' *Hippolytos* (7–8), each god wants a piece of the pie in the form of cultic honours (*timē* is the key word here), but even as they vie for recognition they do not infringe upon another god's territory and do not step on each other's toes. By contrast, the Hesiodic succession myth does not fit such a pattern of mutual tolerance and reconciliation of competing interests. In the generational struggle for succession between father and son, divine competition turns ugly and violent when Kronos castrates Ouranos with a sickle and swallows his own children to stay in power, only to be dethroned ultimately by Zeus, who then rules supreme as 'the most powerful of the gods' (θεῶν κράτιστος, as Pindar calls him).<sup>73</sup> The Hesiodic account of Zeus' rise to supremacy is a story of a power struggle between gods on a grand scale. Its emphasis on the violent transfer of divine power is exceptional in Greek myth, and as we have known for some time, the succession myth had in fact been imported from the Near East.<sup>74</sup>

Divine power does not normally manifest itself in confrontations between gods and other gods, but in interactions between gods and mortals. The gods demonstrate their supernatural power through epiphany, dreams, visions and miracles, through rewards and punishments, through interference with the natural order and through other forms of divine interventions in human affairs. Each of these manifestations of divine power in action is abundantly attested in literary texts as well as inscriptions from the archaic period to late antiquity. These texts constitute a formidable record of divine activity that shows us, in the words of Robert Parker, 'gods at work'.<sup>75</sup> Given the absolute qualities that the Greeks ascribed to their gods, it is almost paradoxical that so many of these gods had to work so hard to sustain their divine status. Gods in action who demonstrate their supernatural power include not only new gods such as Asklepios, Isis and Sarapis, but also established ones such as Athena and Apollo. Gods who perform miracles to corroborate their own divinity serve as a reminder that the gods themselves are cultural constructs whose identities are continually in formation. No all-encompassing or definitive portrayal of any Greek god existed in antiquity, nor can it be found in modern

73 Pind. *Ol.* 14.14; Hes. *Theog.* 173–82, 459–91, cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 167–78.

74 See P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966); M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 276–332; W. Burkert, 'Prehistory of Presocratic philosophy in an orientaling context', in Curd and Graham, *Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, pp. 55–85 at 60–2, 68–72.

75 Parker, 'Gods at work', in *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, pp. 387–451.

scholarship. I am not convinced that Greek gods are 'indescribable', as Robert Parker concludes in his recent book,<sup>76</sup> but they are definitely elusive and hard to pin down. Their power and ultimate inscrutability are a large part of their mystique.

Yet, despite its diffuse nature and lack of definition, or perhaps because of it, divine power in all its manifestations is the driving force behind Greek polytheism in so far as it defines the relationships between the gods and their modes of interaction with humans. In fact Greek polytheism can be likened to a power grid in which the gods function as energy cells that reinforce each other and deliver boundless energy to an entire network of human consumers, for better or worse.

### CONCLUSION

It follows that Greek gods ought not be studied singly and in isolation from one another, but as interactive forces in a complex polytheistic system in which the parts derive their functional validation from the whole and vice versa. This point has rightly been driven home in Robert Parker's recent critique of the structuralist definition of 'polytheism as a system with a logic'.<sup>77</sup> But as Parker points out, polytheism turns out on closer inspection to be a system that is anything but logical and transparent; rather, it is shot through with contradictions, inconsistencies and ambiguities. Apart from Fritz Graf's *Nordionische Kulte* and Parker's study of Athenian polytheism, no adequate treatment of Greek polytheism in context exists, and much remains to be done, whether we define that context as a polis, a region, a literary genre, or an ongoing cultural discourse 'on the nature of the gods'.<sup>78</sup>

By way of conclusion, I submit that *qua* objects of scholarly inquiry the Greek gods are cultural constructs that once existed in the eye of the beholder (epiphany), in the heart of the believer (faith) or in the mind of the contemplator (theology); that immortality, anthropomorphism and power are the three cornerstones in the Greek construction of divinity; and that these generic properties that are shared by all Greek gods have been largely ignored by scholars of Greek religion, who tend to privilege

76 Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, p. 387.

77 Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, pp. 388–94.

78 F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte: Religionsgeschichtliche und epigraphische Untersuchungen zu den Kulturen von Chios, Erythrai, Klazomenai und Phokaia* (Rome: Schweizerisches Institut in Rom, 1985). For an eloquent vision of how the 'système polythéiste' of Greek religion should be defined and reconstructed see M. Detienne, 'Pour expérimenter dans le champ des polythéismes', *Mètis* 9–10 (1994–5), pp. 41–9. Detienne was the first historian of Greek religion who broke with convention and used the term polytheism in the subtitle of a book on Greek gods: *Apollon, le couteau à la main: Une approche expérimentale du polythéisme grec* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

the gods *qua* individuals with their distinct ‘honours (τιμαί), skills (τέχναι) and visible forms (εἶδεα)’, to quote again from Herodotus.<sup>79</sup> If it is true that Greek polytheism constitutes a system of connections, correlations and oppositions among a plurality of gods, and if it is also true that the system as a whole derives its meaning from the interaction of *all* its parts, it follows that those generic properties of the gods cannot be ignored without peril. Yet key concepts of a generic approach to the Greek gods, including their immortality, anthropomorphism and power, receive scant attention in standard books on Greek religion.

For the last time then, ‘What is a Greek god?’ One might expect to find a comprehensive answer in a 1997 book with an almost identical title that collects the papers of a colloquium on Greek gods in the University of Wales.<sup>80</sup> The contributions to this volume deal exclusively with individual or multiple gods in the concrete context of specific periods, themes, texts and settings. The ‘nature of Greek divinity’ is nowhere discussed, and the book never lives up to the lofty promise of its title. Only one of its contributors makes a fleeting attempt to define the essence of Greek divinity, and does so with recourse to the notion of divine power: “‘Power’, indeed, is fundamental, for a powerless god is a contradiction in terms.”<sup>81</sup> Power is unquestionably a fundamental denominator of divinity, but power alone does not make a god, even though certain types of political power tended to go hand in hand with divine aspirations and with formal deification.<sup>82</sup> But rulers who were deified in their lifetime would eventually die, at which point their hopes of immortality faded, whereas humans deified after death became quasi-gods despite their mortality. True immortality is the ultimate mark of genuine divinity, which is inborn rather than acquired. An immortality that is acquired second-hand never comes without a glitch. As Sappho reminds us in the new Cologne papyrus, Eos secured immortality for her mortal lover Tithonos, but she failed to ask for eternal youth: ‘Yet in time grey age o’ertook him, husband of immortal wife’ (ἄθανάταν ἄκοιτιν).<sup>83</sup> The case of Tithonos exempli-

79 Burkert, ‘Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen’.

80 Lloyd, *What is a God?*

81 Lloyd, *What is a God?*, p. 43.

82 A. Henrichs, ‘Demythologizing the past, mythicizing the present: myth, history, and the supernatural at the dawn of the Hellenistic period’, in R. Buxton (ed.), *From Myth to Reason?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 223–48.

83 P. Oxy. 1787 fr. 1 + P. Köln inv. 21351, first published by M. Gronewald and R. Daniel, *ZPE* 147 (2004), pp. 1–8; see M. L. West, ‘The new Sappho’, *ZPE* 151 (2005), pp. 1–9, whose translation I follow. On the paradox of Tithonos’ immortal ageing, instead of the ageless immortality of the Homeric gods, see Clay, ‘Immortal and ageless forever’.

fies that there is no substitute for true immortality, which is everlasting and ageless, qualities beyond human reach: ‘Not to grow old, being human, is impossible’ (ἀγήραον ἄνθρωπον ἔοντ’ οὐ δύνατον γένεσθαι).<sup>84</sup> Sappho concludes that she too cannot escape the ravages of her advancing years. It is to be hoped that future students of the Greek gods do not replicate the missed opportunities of their predecessors, ancient as well as modern, and find a way to escape the burden of the past.

84 Sappho in the Cologne papyrus (see preceding note).





**PART I**

**SYSTEMATIC ASPECTS**



# CANONIZING THE PANTHEON: THE DODEKATHEON IN GREEK RELIGION AND ITS ORIGINS

*Ian Rutherford*

## 1

It is surprising that an idea apparently so central to Greek religion as the twelve gods or Dodekatheon can be traced back no further than the late sixth century BC. This is when an altar of the twelve gods was set up in the agora at Athens by the archon Peisistratos, son of Hippias, and grandson of Peisistratos the tyrant, in 522 BC, during the regime of Hippias.<sup>1</sup> It was a modest, square structure, situated in the northwest corner of the agora, discovered during the construction of the Athens–Piraeus railway, and now bisected by it. The altar of the twelve gods was the symbolic centre of the city: in one of his Dithyrambs for Athens (fr. 75) Pindar calls on the gods who come to the ‘incense-rich navel in holy Athens and the glorious, richly adorned agora’, on the occasion of the ritual reception of Dionysos there at the Dionysia festival. The striking word ‘navel’ (ὀμφαλός) suggests Delphi, the navel-stone and exact centre of the earth, where two eagles let go from the East and the West met.<sup>2</sup> Distance was measured from the Athenian altar: Herodotus (2.71.1) points out that the distance from the city of Heliopolis in Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea was almost exactly the same as that from the altar of the twelve to Olympia.<sup>3</sup> A verse inscription from the fifth century specifies the distance from the altar of the twelve to the Peiraeus.<sup>4</sup> One gets a glimpse of a well-organized measuring system. Peisistratos, who set the altar up, may well have promoted it as the centre of the city and the reference point for measurements. His family seems to have been given to

1 Thuc. 6.54.6–7.

2 C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003).

3 Texts in C. L. Long, *The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 62–72.

4 *IG II<sup>2</sup>.2.2* 2640; Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 64–5.

acts of lasting cultural significance. It was his uncle Hipparchos, after all, who was reputed to have attempted to canonize the performances of the Homer poems.

Another early reference, from about the same period,<sup>5</sup> is a passage of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* where Hermes sacrifices two of the cows he has stolen from Apollo (ll. 120–9):

Then he went on from task to task: first he cut up the rich, fatted meat, and pierced it with wooden spits, and roasted flesh and the honourable chine and the paunch full of dark blood all together. He laid them there upon the ground, and spread out the hides on a rugged rock: and so they are still there many ages afterwards, a long, long time after all this, and are continually. Next glad-hearted Hermes dragged the rich meats he had prepared and put them on a smooth, flat stone, and divided them into twelve portions distributed by lot, making each portion wholly honourable.

The recipients of the twelve places are not specified.<sup>6</sup> Hermes wonders whether to include himself, but thinks better of it (ll. 130–3).

Then glorious Hermes longed for the sacrificial meat, for the sweet savour wearied him, god though he was; nevertheless his proud heart was not prevailed upon to devour the flesh, although he greatly desired. (tr. H. G. Evelyn-White, Loeb)

Olympia claimed to have an early tradition as well: Pindar writing in 484 BC attests the existence of the altars of the Dodekatheon (six in all, each for two gods) and the tradition that they were founded by Herakles (*Ol.* 5, *Ol.* 10.43–50).<sup>7</sup> No archaeological traces of these have been found, but Pindar is unlikely to have invented them, and they probably go back at least to the sixth century BC, so possibly earlier than the single altar in Athens.<sup>8</sup> Contrast the arrangement of altars in the shrine of the twelve, the ‘Dodekatheon’, at Delos, erected

5 R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns: Diachronic Development in the Epic Diction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

6 This passage has been compared by J. Larson, ‘Lugalbanda and Hermes’, *CPh* 100 (2005), pp. 1–16, to a Sumerian text where a founding hero, Lugalbanda, invents sacrifice and offers to four deities.

7 Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 58–62, 87–91, 155–7.

8 L. Weniger, ‘Olympischen Studien’, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 20 (1920–1), pp. 41–78 at 72–3, suggested it went back to the period around 580 BC when the Eleians reorganized the festival (‘Als ein äußeres Zeichen bestehender Einheit von Elis und Olympia wurden in der Altis die sechs Doppelaltäre der Hautgottheiten

around 300 BC, where there were four altars each for three gods.<sup>9</sup> The arrangement of the twelve into four triads is found centuries later in the Neoplatonists, who gave them the functions of being creative, life-giving, protecting and harmonizing.<sup>10</sup>

Cults of the twelve are known in many other places, for example at Chalkedon,<sup>11</sup> at Magnesia on the Maeander, and at Leontinoi in Sicily, where there was a tradition (unverifiable, of course) that worship of the twelve went back to its foundation by Megara and Chalkis (eighth century BC).<sup>12</sup> Sometimes the cult of the twelve is linked to the cult of another deity or deities, as at Kos, where there was a single priest for the cult of 'Zeus Polieus and the twelve gods' (an important cult which housed Koan proxeny decrees);<sup>13</sup> and at Thelpousa in Arcadia, where Pausanias reports a cult of Asklepios and the twelve.<sup>14</sup>

On present evidence it is impossible to say where in Greece the cult of the twelve developed first. Wilamowitz thought of Ionia, and Levêque and Vidal-Naquet followed him.<sup>15</sup> It seems particularly well attested in Attica where, apart from the cult, there are also traditions that the twelve gods acted as judges in various mythological trials, such as in the contest between Poseidon and Athena for Attica.<sup>16</sup> But it is perfectly possible that Athens appropriated it from somewhere else, and Olympia would be a good candidate.

A major change in the role of the twelve seems to have come about in the fourth century BC. In book 5 of his *Laws* Plato's Athenian sets out how he wants to divide up the new polis of Magnesia (745d–e): there are to be 5,040 shares of land (this being a perfect number:  $2^4 \times 3^2 \times 5 \times 7$ ), each divided into 2, making 10,080 half-shares in all. Some space is to be reserved for Hestia, Zeus and Athena – the three poliadic deities – as in real cities, but the rest is to be divided between the twelve gods, apparently as slices of a cake, making 420 full shares or 840 half-shares for each, and each divine share is made the basis

beider Länder errichtet . . . Von diesen haben Athena, Poseidon, Dionysos und die Chariten ihren Hauptdienst in Elis, die übrigen in Olympia').

9 Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 182, 198–201.

10 Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 317–19.

11 Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 217–18; inscription: Long, *Twelve Gods*, T11D, pp. 56–7; *LSAM*; R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Khalkedon* (Bonn: Habelt, 1980), n. 13.

12 Polyaeus 5.5.2.

13 Texts in Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 91–5.

14 Paus. 8.25.3; Long, *Twelve Gods*, T12.

15 P. Levêque and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Cleisthenes the Athenian* (New York: Humanity Books, 1996).

16 Long, *Twelve Gods*, p. 180 and T18.

for a tribe. The argument is taken a stage further in book 8, 827b–d, where there are to be monthly festivals for the twelve gods; one of the twelve is Plouton, and chthonic offerings are to be made to him during the twelfth month.<sup>17</sup>

Plato's Magnesia was not a real city, and no precedent for this is recorded, but after Plato we begin to find echoes of it. In the homonymous Magnesia on the Maeander, where the cult of the Dodekatheon played an important role, it seems not to be entirely a coincidence that in the third century BC we find most of the tribes of the city apparently named after members of the twelve gods.<sup>18</sup> In addition, a number of cities, starting from about the time of Plato, reformed their calendars in such a way that each month corresponded to a different deity. The earliest attested is Histiaia in Euboea, and later examples include Demetrias in the Magnesian part of Thessaly, as well as Kassandreia, Philippi and Amphipolis.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, someone writing a history of the Dodekatheon would have to distinguish two stages: first, its emergence in the sixth century BC, and then a systematization in the fourth. Its origins may have had something to do with a desire to impose order on the pantheon, a particular problem in ancient Greece, where groupings of gods varied greatly from region to region and there was no central norm. A standardized set of twelve gods could be thought of as a 'representation of the pantheon', which is common to all cities. Thus, it is an integrative feature, almost a Panhellenic one.<sup>20</sup>

If so, you might think that the members of Dodekatheon would always be the same, but in fact the members varied like everything else in Greek religion. The most often cited group is:<sup>21</sup> Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes,

17 On the twelve gods in Plato's *Laws*: G. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of the Laws* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 434–7. Plato's vision of the pantheon fused with the city plan probably owes a lot to his own mathematical tastes: cf. the dodekahedric cosmos of the *Phaedo*.

18 Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 221–2; O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander* (Berlin: Spemann, 1900), p. 212. Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 248–51, interpreting the procession of the Twelve decreed in 196 BC as a homage to the Roman lectisternium.

19 C. Trümper, *Untersuchungen zu den altgriechischen Monatsnamen und Monatsfolgen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp. 266–70. Histiaia: D. Knoepfler, 'Le calendrier des Chalcidiens de Thrace', *Journal des Savants* 1989, pp. 23–59; Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 179, 267–8. Histiaia could have adopted it earlier, in the mid-fourth century BC. The Roman 'farmer calendar has a somewhat similar arrangement (Trümper, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 270–1). Eudoxus has been thought to be behind it all.

20 Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*, p. 95.

21 See Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 140–1.

Athena, Hephaistos and Hestia. Some are more secure in their position than others. Hestia and Ares tend to be the first to be jettisoned and we may find Dionysos, Herakles or Hades sneaking in. But the variations are often even greater. One strikingly aberrant list is the Olympic one, known from Herodorus, where the deities were arranged in six pairs:<sup>22</sup>

Zeus and Poseidon,  
Hera and Athena,  
Hermes and Apollo,  
the Charites and Dionysos,  
Artemis and the river Alpheios  
Kronos and Rhea

So there are five differences from the standard twelve: added are Dionysos, Kronos and Rhea, the River Alpheios and the Charites (Kronos obviously belongs there because of the Kronion, and Rhea goes with him; the River Alpheios speaks for itself); absent are Demeter, Hestia, Aphrodite and Ares and Hephaistos. The seven deities common to this list and the 'standard' one are: Zeus, Poseidon, Hera, Athena, Hermes, Apollo and Artemis.

The Olympian Dodekatheon is the best attested variant pantheon, but there may have been others. At Chalkedon, the twelve established by the Argonauts are reported by Herodorus (again) to have included Hades, apparently replacing Ares.<sup>23</sup> Hades–Plouton was also included in Plato's *Laws*. There may be another variant Dodekatheon at Pherai in Thessaly, where Stephan Miller reconstructed an altar with the heads of six named goddesses, which are plausibly taken as the female side of a Dodekatheon, and which include Einodia (a form of Artemis?) and also Themis.<sup>24</sup>

However, while the members of the Dodekatheon may have varied, the number twelve itself was a consistent, levelling factor.<sup>25</sup> So in Egyptian religion alongside the disorder of the pantheon, there was also a group of nine gods, the Ennead, or *Psdt*, associated primarily with Heliopolis, where it comprised a divine family: Atum, his children Shu and Tefnut, their children Geb and Nut, and their children

22 Herodorus *FGrH* 31 F 34b, cited by a scholion on Pindar, *Ol.* 5.10 (Drachmann 1. 141–2).

23 *FGrH* 31 F 37, cited by schol. Apol. Rhod. 2. 531–2.

24 S. G. Miller, 'The altar of the six goddesses in Thessalian Pherai', *CSCA* 7 (1974), pp. 231–56; Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 205–6.

25 Cf. L. B. Zaidman, and P. Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 183.

Osiris, Seth, Isis and Nephthys. But several other cities claimed to have their own version of the Ennead besides Heliopolis, and in one respect these displayed even greater variation than the twelve gods in Greece, namely in so far as these other Enneads did not always have nine members: it was seven at Abydos, and at Egyptian Thebes two groups of fifteen, one comprising major Egyptian deities, and the other comprising local deities.<sup>26</sup> As Erik Hornung put it in his survey of Egyptian religion:<sup>27</sup>

The purpose of these numerical principles, whether they use the number two or three as their base, is to create order in the pantheon; for the Egyptians this is always a diverse, plural order. Without abandoning the principle of plurality or excluding a single deity from the pantheon its unmanageable multiplicity is condensed into a number that can be comprehended.

And the same could probably be said for the Dodekathemon in Greece.<sup>28</sup>

## 2

Why the number twelve? It might be obvious and too widespread to need an explanation: there are twelve labours of Herakles, twelve children of Aiolos; twelve members of the Delphic Amphictyony, and twelve tribes of Israel; twelve months. On the other hand, the question has been asked whether the Greek Dodekathemon is a borrowing from another culture, and if so from which.

Herodotus seems to imply that the idea of twelve gods was first developed in Egypt (2.4.1–2), and he specifies that in Egyptian theology the twelve are a second-generation group of gods derived from the eight (2.43.3 2.46.1, 2.145.1). On the face of it, this is a problematic claim: in Egypt the most common groups are the Ennead (as we have seen)

26 See E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, tr. John Baines (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 222. Even twelve members are sometimes found: W. Barta, *Untersuchungen zum Götterkreis der Neunheit* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1973), pp. 69 and 65–73.

27 Hornung, *Conceptions*, p. 223; cf. C. Traunecker, *The Gods of Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 62: 'For the ancient Egyptians, dividing the gods and goddesses into numerical sets was a way to impose order on the imaginary. The goal was not to enumerate its contents but, rather, to conceive a tidy structure with a reassuring logic.'

28 Compare also the role of divine Heptads in Anatolian religion: V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 481–7; D. Bawanypeck, *Die Rituale der Auguren* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), p. 18 n. 77.



associated with Heliopolis, and the Ogdoad of Hermopolis, whose Egyptian name is Achmin – ‘eight-city’.<sup>29</sup> In Hermopolite doctrine the primeval Ogdoad engendered the sun god, who was himself chief god of the Ennead. Hence, J. Gwyn Griffith’s solution to the problem is that by the Egyptian twelve Herodotus means an expanded version of the Ennead, and in fact Enneads of twelve are attested.<sup>30</sup> However, while this solution helps us to understand what Herodotus says (and one must assume that he is reporting the received wisdom that several generations of Greek settlers in Egypt and the Egyptian temple staff and translators had contributed to), it seems unlikely that the Greek Dodekathemon originates with the Egyptian Ennead: a nominal set of twelve could not be derived from a nominal set of nine.

One likely point of contact between Greek and Egyptian traditions is that the Egyptians had the idea that different gods corresponded to the different months of the year. As Long points out, this creates the possibility that the idea of twelve month gods as we find it in Plato’s *Laws* and in Hellenistic cities comes from Egypt.<sup>31</sup> The Egyptian list of month deities, attested from the fourteenth century BC, is:<sup>32</sup> (1) Thoth, (2) Ptah, (3) Hathor, (4) Sachmet, (5) Min, (6) Rkh-w, (7) Rkh-nds, (8) Renenutet, (9) Chons, (10) Chentechtai, (11) Ipet, (12) Re-Harachte. Some of these gods are better known than others. Trümpy has pointed to one specific parallel between Egyptian and Greek traditions: the fact that the position of the goddess Sachmet, as guardian of the fourth Egyptian month, corresponds to the Magnesian month Artemision, which is roughly our November (i.e. quite different from the normal position of festivals of Artemis in the spring).<sup>33</sup>

29 In the *Book of the Dead*, the number forty-two seems to be important, which probably has something to do with the fact that there were forty-two nomes in Egypt, and forty-two sacred books in some sources.

30 J. Gwyn Griffith, ‘The orders of gods in Greece and Egypt’, *JHS* 75 (1955), pp. 21–3; see also A. B. Lloyd, *A Commentary on Herodotus, Book II*, 3 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1975–88), ad loc. Notice also that in Egyptian mythology the Ennead acts a jury, as in Athenian mythology: D. Meeks and C. Farvard-Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 41; Barta, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 31–35; Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 75–6.

31 Trümpy, *Untersuchungen*; Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 147–51; it is not certain that Hdt. 2.4.1–2 refers to the month gods (cf. Long, *Twelve Gods*, p. 148; C. Froidefond, *Le mirage égyptien dans la littérature grecque d’Homère à Aristote* [Paris, 1971], p. 205 n. 73).

32 Long, *Twelve Gods*, p. 339; O. Neugebauer and R. A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1960–), III 12–14 n. 2; J. Osing, ‘Monat, Monatsgötter’, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 4 (1982), pp. 191–2.

33 Long, *Twelve Gods*, p. 339, Trümpy, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 273–75. Trümpy also suggests that the sequence of gods corresponding to months 11, 12 and 1 in the Egyptian and Greco-Roman calendars correspond.

If there was influence in Plato's lifetime, it could have come through the mathematician Eudoxos of Knidos, who is said to have spent a year in Egypt, and was interested in calendrical matters. On the other hand, if we concede that influence from Egypt is possible in the fourth century BC, I suppose it might have happened earlier as well: the fact that Herodotus attaches significance to the distance between the altar in the Athenian agora and Heliopolis (home of the Ennead) suggests that comparison between groupings of deities in the two traditions might already have been going on in the fifth century.

Another area where people have looked for the origin of the twelve is Anatolia, and here we do find groups of twelve. In particular, there is a type of relief from Lycia, dated to the Roman period, which illustrate twelve figures arranged on either side of a central figure. They are mostly from Komba in northern Lycia. Some have the caption 'δώδεκα θεοίς'.<sup>34</sup> These differ from the Greek Dodekatheon in that there is no sign of gender differentiation among the deities.<sup>35</sup> In a Greek epigram inscribed on the late fifth-century 'Xanthos Stele' (elsewhere written in poorly understood Lycian), a certain Kheriga, a local dynast, boasts that he has founded an altar of the twelve there. In the context of the reliefs from Komba, this has suggested to some that Kheriga's twelve gods are really Lycian deities. Some scholars have even claimed to find an expression in the accompanying Lycian text of the pillar with the meaning 'twelve gods' (*mahani tusñti*; *mahani* = gods), although this could equally well mean 'they established the gods'.<sup>36</sup>

In any case, support for the existence of twelve gods native to Anatolian has also been found in the extraordinary rock-chambers at Yazilikaya (thirteenth century BC). The two chambers have rock-cut figures denoting Hittite gods: in chamber A, which has forty-two figures, and seems to represent the whole pantheon, the twelve appear at the start of the procession of male gods on the right;<sup>37</sup> chamber B,

34 See B. Freyer-Schauenburg, *Die lykischen Zwölfgötter-Reliefs* (Bonn: Habelt, 1994).

35 See L. Robert, 'Les Douze Dieux en Lycie', *BCH* 107 (1983), pp. 587–93.

36 TL 44(a)12, as restored in E. Laroche, 'Les epitaphs Lyciennes', in P. Demargne (ed.), *Fouilles de Xanthos V: Tombes-maisons, tombes rupestres et sarcophages* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974), p. 146 n. 41, and 'Les dieux de la Lycie classique d'après les textes Lyciens', in *Actes du Colloque sur la Lycie Antique* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1980), pp. 1–6 at 2; 'they placed the gods': C. Melchert, *Lycian Lexicon* (Chapel Hill, NC: self-published, 1993), p. 82. So G. Neumann, *Glossar des Lykischen: Überarbeitet und zum Druck gebracht von Johann Tischler* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), s. *tusñti*.

37 Haas, *Geschichte*, p. 488; V. Haas and M. Wäfler, 'Yazilikaya und der Grosse Tempel', *Oriens Antiquus* 13 (1974), pp. 211–26 at 223.

where one of the deities has the form of a down-turned sword, seems to have had a funerary or chthonic function, and here the twelve are on a separate panel.<sup>38</sup> In neither case do the twelve show signs of gender differentiation. Further traces of a group of twelve gods are to be found in Hittite rituals from the late second millennium BC, where again the context is chthonic.<sup>39</sup> Taking this back a stage further we might think of the ‘primeval gods’ or lower gods’ of Hurrian and Mesopotamian origin – the so-called ‘Anunnaki’, who are invoked at the start of the Kumarbi Cycle; in most accounts of the Anunnaki, at least those from Hittite sources, there are precisely twelve of them, arranged in six pairs of male and female.<sup>40</sup> Now, it has often been claimed that the Anunnaki correspond roughly to the Titans of Greek mythology, who are also twelve in number, divided equally into male and female, perceived as deities of a previous generation and associated with the chthonic realm. The correspondence is not exact, because the present generation of gods in Hittite-Hurrian mythology does not come to power by defeating the Anunnaki, and neither Kumarbi nor the various adversaries that he creates for Tessub are among them. Nevertheless, the correspondence between Anunnaki and Titans is close enough for us to offer the hypothesis that in Greek religion, the idea of a set of twelve gods was applied first to the Titans, in imitation of the Anunnaki, and then transferred to the present generation.<sup>41</sup> In that case, the presence of Kronos and Rhea among the Dodekatheton of Olympia would not be an aberration but a trace of the earlier arrangement.

If the twelve in chamber B at Yazilikaya are chthonic, the twelve

38 K. Bittel, ‘Bildbeschreibung’, in K. Bittel, *Bogazköy-Hattusa. IX: Das hethitische Felsheiligtum Yazilikaya* (Berlin: Mann, 1975), pp. 125–65.

39 See O. Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 23 and 41, citing H. G. Güterbock, ‘Religion und Kultus der Hethiter’, in G. Walser (ed.), *Neuere Hethiterforschung* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1964), pp. 54–73 at 72 n. 91; H. G. Güterbock, ‘A votive sword with Old Assyrian inscription’, in *Studies in Honor of B. Landsberger on his 75th Birthday, April 21, 1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 197–8 at 198, and ‘Einschlägige Textstellen’, in K. Bittel, *Bogazköy-Hattusa. IX: Das hethitische Felsheiligtum Yazilikaya* (Berlin: Mann, 1975), pp. 189–92 at 191–2, referring to CTH 449: A = KUB 35.145, B = KUB 35, 143. Haas, *Geschichte*, pp. 487–8; V. G. Ardzinba, ‘The birth of the Hittite king and the new year (notes on the Hassumas festival)’, *Oikumene* 5 (1986), pp. 91–101 at 96, etc. Another ritual which implies twelve deities: D. Yoshida, ‘Das AN.TAH.SUM.SAR-Fest im Tempel der Sonnengöttin’, in Takahito Mikasa (ed.), *Cult and Ritual in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1992), pp. 121–58 at 150 n. 88 (referred to by Haas, *Geschichte*, p. 488 n. 175).

40 A. Archi, ‘The names of the primeval gods’, *Orientalia* 59 (1990), pp. 114–29.

41 So J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 73–99.

in chamber A could be a representation of the whole pantheon (like the Greek Dodekatheon or the Egyptian Ennead). Hittite scholars have drawn attention to a Hittite magical text (the ritual of Tunlawi) where an animal is described as having precisely twelve parts, which, it is suggested, might indicate a notion of completeness (compare Hermes' division of the sacrificial animal into twelve parts).<sup>42</sup> A broader context for this association has been provided by the Abkhazian Hittitologist Vladislav Ardzinba, who argues for the practice of offerings to a group of twelve (or thirteen) month gods in the Hittite tradition,<sup>43</sup> and points out the repeated appearance of the number twelve in the so-called '*hassumas*' (birth of the king?) festival, for which he suggests an Indo-European background.<sup>44</sup> These claims have been endorsed by the French Hittitologist Emilia Masson, who traces them back to a hypothetical Indo-European mythology of the twelve parts of the year.<sup>45</sup>

### 3

The Greek Dodekatheon, then, seems to recall the role of the twelve gods in Hittite religion in two respects: first, in so far as behind the Dodekatheon may lurk the twelve chthonic Titans, who arguably continue the Anunnaki, and second in so far as the Dodekatheon can be taken as a representation of the complete pantheon, a symbol of totality. But in Greek religion, the idea of twelve gods also develops specific associations that are not found elsewhere.<sup>46</sup>

42 Haas and Wäfler, 'Yazilikaya'.

43 Ardzinba, 'Birth of the Hittite king', p. 96, with reference to *KUB II.13*, the so-called 'festival of the month' (cf. J. Klinger, *Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der hattischen Kultschicht* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996], p. 258 with text on pp. 610–11, where the translation is omitted). Klinger, *Untersuchungen*, does not comment on Ardzinba's suggestion, though Haas, *Geschichte*, cites it. See also A. Goetze, 'Theophorous elements of the Anatolian proper names from Cappadocia', *Language* 29 (1953), pp. 263–77 at 266. See Haas, *Geschichte*, pp. 742–3, on the symbolism of groups of twelve gods in another Hittite festival.

44 Ardzinba, 'Birth of the Hittite king', p. 96, referring to V. N. Toporov, 'O strukture nekotorykh arkaischeskikh tekstov, sootnosimikh s kontseptsei mirovoy dereva', *Trudi po znakovim sistemam* 5 (1971), pp. 9–62 at 18, 24–33, 42–3. For body parts of the animal, A. Kammenhuber, 'Die hethitischen Vorstellungen von Seele und Leib, Herz und Leibesinnerem, Kopf und Person. 2: Teil', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 57 (1965), pp. 177–222 at 221.

45 E. Masson, *Les douze dieux de l'immortalité: Croyances indo-européennes à Yazilikaya* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1989); continued to some extent in E. Masson, *Le combat pour l'immortalité: Héritage Indo-Européen dans la mythologie Anatolienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991).

46 See S. Georgoudi, 'Les douze dieux et les autres dans l'espace culturel grec', *Kernos* 11 (1998), pp. 73–83.

First, it is associated with acts of foundation. Thus, after the flood, Deukalion is supposed to have founded an altar to the twelve gods, according to Hellanicus. It turns up in colonization narratives as well. In the story of the foundation of Sicilian Leontinoi by men from Megara and from Chalkis, the Megarians take advantage of the Chalkidians when they are performing a ritual for the twelve gods in the agora, and exterminate them.<sup>47</sup> Another case is Olympia. And it is perhaps because of this association with foundation that we tend to find altars of the twelve in the centre of cities, in Athens, and in Magnesia on the Maeander, in the foundation story of Leontinoi and so on.

In a similar way, the Dodekatheon seems to have been used as a symbol of foundational power by real dynasts, like Peisistratos the Younger; so too the moment when Euboean Histiaia seems to have introduced a calendar based on the twelve was one of intense political significance: its synoecism in the mid-fourth century BC; and the pattern of naming the months after the gods of which we see a spate at the start of the third century is generally put down to Macedonian influence.<sup>48</sup>

Another important association is with Hellenism. Thus, when Alexander the Great reaches the furthest point of his expedition, in northern India, at the River Hyphasis, he is said to have built altars to the twelve gods. Agamemnon did the same in the Troad.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Jason and the Argonauts dedicated an altar when they were passing through the Bosphoros on the way to Colchis, the symbolic crossing-point between Europe and Asia.<sup>50</sup>

An even earlier association between the Dodekatheon and the limit between Europe and Asia is found in the poetic text in Greek from Xanthos in Lycia mentioned above, in which the local dynast Kheriga (Gergis in Greek) boasts of his victories over Greek armies. We know from other sources that this had something to do with Athenian incursions in Lycia and Caria in the 420s. The poem begins:

ἐ]ξ οὗ τ' Εὐρώπην [Α]σίας δίχα πόν[τ]ος ἔνεμ[ε]ν  
ο]ὔδεις πω Λυκίων στήλην τοιάνδε ἀνέθηκ(ε)ν  
δ]ώδεκα θεοῖς ἀγορᾶς ἐν καθαρωῖ τεμένει

47 That comes from Polyainos 5.5.2, cited by Long, *Twelve Gods*, pp. 95–6.

48 Trümper, *Untersuchungen*, p. 270. Demetrios Poliorketes founded Demetrias in 293 BC.

49 An altar of the twelve on Mount Lekton is said to be a 'foundation of Agamemnon' (Strabo 13.1.48); there was also supposed to be one at a place called Achaion Limen, the 'Harbour of the Achaeans', in Aiolis to the south (Strabo 13.3.5).

50 First in Apol. Rhod. 2.531–3.

Ever since the sea divided Europe from Asia  
 none of the Lycians hitherto has dedicated such a monument  
 to the twelve gods in the pure temenos of the agora

Kheriga goes on to describe how he sacked cities with the help of Athena, and slew seven Arcadians. Some have taken the reference to the twelve gods in this text as further evidence that the twelve are of Anatolian origin; one Anatolian expert, Laroche, even suggested that the Lycian for ‘twelve gods’ might be identified in the Lycian part of the Xanthos Stele (see above). In fact the association between twelve and the agora looks very Greek and the epigram can be read in a different way: the beginning recalls the start of an earlier epigram set up by the Athenians to commemorate their victories over the Persians at Cyprus in 449 BC.<sup>51</sup>

ἐξ οὗ γ’ Εὐρώπην Ἀσίας δίχα πόντος ἔνευμε  
 καὶ πόλιας θνητῶν θεοῦρος Ἄρης ἐπέχει,  
 οὐδέν πω τοιοῦτον ἐπιχθονίων γένετ’ ἀνδρῶν . . .

Ever since the Pontus divided Europe from Asia,  
 and leaping Ares hold the cities of mortals,  
 no such deed of men was produced on land . . .

This epigram is the definitive statement of European mastery over Asia. As Peter Thonemann observes, in his epigram Kheriga is appropriating the voice of this poem and reversing the significance.<sup>52</sup> In that context, the reference to the Dodekatheon in the agora of Xanthos in Kheriga’s poem can be read as part of the same discourse of conflict between Asia and Europe: in the past, Greeks have had a habit of founding altars of the twelve as they crossed into Asia, but now the Lycian dynast appropriates that practice for his own ends. It is thus much more likely that the Lycians were appropriating a Greek association of ideas in this case, though the Greek Dodekatheon may at an earlier point have been influenced by Anatolian practice.

51 This is no. 45 in D. L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Diod. Sic. 11.62.3.

52 P. Thonemann, ‘Lycia, Athens, Amorges’, in J. Ma et al. (eds), *Interpreting the Athenian Empire* (London: Duckworth, 2009), pp. 167–94.

## GODS IN GREEK INSCRIPTIONS: SOME METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

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Apuleius' Psyche already knew that dedicatory inscriptions were the quickest way to learn who the divine incumbent of a sanctuary was – most dedications addressed the main divinity worshipped in a sanctuary, so she quickly identified Juno as the incumbent of a sanctuary she stumbled upon.<sup>1</sup> From their study of a growing number of ancient objects, Renaissance antiquarians were familiar with the combination of a divine image and a dedicatory inscription on its base, and the author of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, among other things a delightful document of early Renaissance antiquarianism, invented such epigraphical monuments of divinities that were relevant to his story. In the study of ancient gods, however, inscriptions rarely played a large role. Historians used epigraphical evidence mainly when describing local cults: well before Lewis Farnell (1856–1934) in his *Cults of the Greek States* printed the relevant epigraphical texts among his references, scholars such as Sam Wide (1861–1918) combined epigraphy with the literary and archaeological evidence. But not being epigraphers, these authors used inscriptions mostly in a rather cursory fashion, and since many of these monographs were written in the late nineteenth century, before the collection of the *Inscriptiones Graecae* were available, their usefulness is rather limited nowadays.<sup>2</sup> No scholar, as far as I know,

- 1 Apul. *Met.* 6.3: Psyche entered a shrine and 'saw precious offerings and cloths lettered in gold affixed to the trees and the doorposts, attesting the name of the goddess to whom they were dedicated' (*videt dona pretiosa et lacinias auro litteratas ramis arborum postibusque suffixas, quae cum gratia facti nomen deae, cui fuerant dicata, testabantur*; tr. E. J. Kenney). Apuleius is not the only author to have noticed this; see Ov. *Fast.* 3.267f. and Bömer's long note for more parallels.
- 2 Sam Wide published his *De sacris Troezeniorum, Hermionensium, Epidauriorum commentatio academica* in 1888, *IG IV Argolis* appeared 1902, IV.1.<sup>2</sup> *Epidaurus* in 1923; his exemplary *Lakonische Kulte* came out in 1893, *IG V.1 Laconia et Messenia* appeared in 1913. M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Berlin and Leipzig: Teubner, 1906) excludes Attica, the one place with a completed *IG* corpus; it would be desirable but very tedious to bring his footnotes up to date.

has looked at the Greek gods uniquely through the lens of a corpus of evidence characterized by its material conditions only, instead of its content or literary genre. This chapter will explore whether it is worthwhile to do so, and what the possible problems and gains would be. I will focus on two closely circumscribed corpora, the inscriptions of the small southern Ionian city of Priene, published in 1903 after the German excavations of the mainly Hellenistic city, and those of the equally small Thessalian city of Gonnoi, published by its excavator, Bruno Helly;<sup>3</sup> some of these inscriptions will serve as jumping-off points for more general questions.

In doing so, we will of necessity have to reflect on questions of methodology. Perhaps the most important issue is how to make sense of evidence that is very fragmentary both because we have lost the vast majority of inscriptions and because most inscriptions lack the comfortable discursive fullness of literary texts, with the possible exception of the wordy documents issued from royal and imperial chancelleries. After all, epigraphs were written by people and for people who rarely felt the need to spell out the obvious and for whom every letter meant time and money for the stonemason: inscriptions assume a rich context of local knowledge, and they need more specialized labour than does writing a papyrus text. Our usual procedure is to look for parallels elsewhere, in the inscriptions from other cities or in fuller and more explicit literary texts. The underlying assumption is that religious manifestations in the entire Greek world are uniform enough to make such a comparison useful to fill in gaps. The assumption is dangerous, as shown by a few prominent case studies that have come to emphasize the local peculiarity over the Panhellenic uniformity especially expressed in literary texts such as Hesiod's *Theogony* or the *Homeric Hymns*:<sup>4</sup> whoever deals with the actual manifestation of Greek ritual and belief has to deal with a wide local diversity that is not easily unified, as ancient authors already realized.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the Greeks themselves were convinced of an underlying unity founded, in Herodotus' famous words, by Hesiod and Homer, as

3 F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Die Inschriften von Priene* (Berlin: Reimer, 1906); B. Helly, *Gonnoi, I: La cité et son histoire; II: Les inscriptions* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1973). More recent texts in *SEG*.

4 Most prominently C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri: a model for personality definitions in Greek religion', *JHS* 98 (1978), pp. 101–21, again in C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *'Reading' Greek Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 147–88.

5 The local diversity is implied in antiquarian writings such as Plutarch's *Greek Questions* or Pausanias' *Perihegesis* (on whose value for Greek religion see V. Pirenne-Delforge, *Retour à la source: Pausanias et la religion grecque = Kernos*, Suppl. 20 [Liège: CIERGA, 2008]).



they were convinced of a basic linguistic unity of Greekness despite the many local dialects – the dialectic of a common Hellenic language and its multiple dialectal expressions might well be a useful model on which to understand the tension between Panhellenic and local religion:<sup>6</sup> the former is an elite and abstract construct mainly used in the quest for identity, the latter is the result of the concrete experiences of both the ancient performer and the modern researcher.

### SANCTUARIES, PRIESTS AND MYTHS

Inscriptions are public documents, issuing from civic bodies as well as from private individuals: often gods appear in them in their public and civic roles. Gods own sanctuaries, have priests, and receive sacrifices and dedications from the city, its officials and its subgroups, but also from individuals, citizens, alien residents and foreigners.<sup>7</sup> Festivals with their sacrifices, temples and priests contribute to the construction of a divine persona and to that of the local pantheon, which in turn helps define a divine individual. Myths, in our scholarly understanding the single most important tool for constructing a divinity, are rare in inscriptions: story-telling was almost never the purpose of these documents; with a few exceptions they at best allude to a story that was told locally and, if we are lucky, is more fully preserved in the fragments of a local history. Neither inscriptions from Priene nor those from Gonnoi narrate or allude to a local myth, as some texts from other cities do. Among these are the Hellenistic verses on the mythical history of the city of Halikarnassos published a few years ago;<sup>8</sup> the

6 S. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), programmatically announced the multiplicity in his book title.

7 Lucian. *Sacr.* 10, in a short evolutionary history of divine worship, insists on the early local worship of gods: a first phase of purely natural worship is followed by worship in city-states where ‘people regard the gods as their fellow citizens’.

8 Published by S. Isager, ‘The pride of Halikarnassos: editio princeps of an inscription from Salmakis’, *ZPE* 123 (1998), pp. 1–23, and S. Isager and P. Pedersen (eds), *The Salmakis Inscription and Hellenistic Halikarnassos* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004), pp. 217–37; see also H. Lloyd-Jones, ‘The pride of Halicarnassus’, *ZPE* 124 (1999), pp. 1–14; M. Gigante, ‘Il nuovo testo epigrafico di Alicarnasso’, *Atene e Roma* 44 (1999), pp. 1–8; G. B. D’Alessio, ‘Some notes on the Salmakis inscription’, in Isager and Pedersen, *The Salmakis Inscription and Hellenistic Halikarnassos*, pp. 43–57 (mainly literary appreciation); R. Gagné, ‘What is the pride of Halicarnassus?’, *ClAnt* 25 (2006), pp. 1–33; J. N. Bremmer, ‘Zeus’ own country: cult and myth in *The Pride of Halicarnassus*’, in U. Dill and C. Walde (eds), *Antike Mythen: Media, Transformations and Sense-Constructions* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 125–45; F. Graf, ‘Zeus and his parhedroi in Halikarnassos: a study in religion and inscriptions’, in A. Martínez Fernández (ed.), *Estudios de Epigrafía Griega* (La Laguna: Universidad, 2009), pp. 333–48.

many founding myths used as political arguments in the East of the empire by places eager to construct for themselves a Greek pedigree;<sup>9</sup> and the information that Orestes brought an image of Artemis from her temple among the Taurians, best known from Euripides' *Taurian Iphigeneia* as the cult legend of Halai Araphenides in Attica, but also used to explain several other cults, such as the ritual of Artemis Orthia in Sparta or the secret cult of Artemis on the island of Patmos.<sup>10</sup> The closest to such a local myth is the dream narration of one Philios from Cyprus, in which he justified the worship of the hero Naulochos as a guardian of Priene at the gate that received the main traffic from the plain of the Maeander and the port city of Naulochos (*I. Priene* 196):

ὕπνωθεῖς Φίλιος Κύπριος γένος ἐξ ἀλαμῖνος  
 υἱὸς Ἀρίστωνος Ναόλοχον εἶδεν ὄναρ  
 θεσμοφόρους τε ἀγνᾶς ποτνίας ἐμ φάρεσι λεοκοῖς·  
 ὄψεσι δ' ἐν τρισσαῖς ἦρωα τόνδε σέβειν  
 ἥνωγον πόλειως φύλακοι γῶρόν τ' ἀπέδειξαν·  
 ὦν ἔνεκα ἴδρυσεν τόνδε θεῖον Φίλιος.

In his sleep, Philios, a Cypriot from Salamis, son of Ariston, saw in a dream Naulochos<sup>11</sup> and the sacred ladies, the Thesmophoroi, in white garments; and in three dreams, they ordered that this hero be worshipped as a guardian of the city, and they showed the place. For this reason, Philios placed the divine being here.

The term ἦρωα τόνδε (l. 4) must refer to the same image of the worshipped hero as the term τόνδε θεῖον in line 6. He is otherwise unknown to us and must be the eponymous hero of Priene's port city. Demeter and Kore, who order the establishment of his cult, had an important sanctuary on the hillside above the city centre with dedications whose iconography underlined female sexuality. But they also protected the wealth of a community and the obligation to feed everybody; in an age in which grain imports were important to supplement and bolster the local harvests, a flourishing port city was essential.

Inscriptions document mainly cult, the interaction humans had with

9 See T. S. Scheer, *Mythische Vorväter: Zur Bedeutung griechischer Heroenmythen im Selbstverständnis kleinasiatischer Städte* (Munich: Editio Maris, 1993).

10 Patmos: Kaibel 872; G. Manganaro, 'Le iscrizioni delle isole milesie', *ASAA* 41/42 (1963–4), pp. 293–349, no. 34. On the entire complex see F. Graf, 'Das Götterbild aus dem Taurerland,' *Antike Welt* 10.4 (1979), pp. 33–41.

11 M. Schede, *Die Ruinen von Priene: Kurze Beschreibung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964<sup>2</sup>, originally 1934), p. 17, suggests understanding Naulochos as the (well-attested) name of Priene's port city; it makes better sense to assume him to be its eponymous founding hero.

their gods, and thus point to the role the gods played in a community. Priene's civic divinity was Athena Polias, 'the goddess who presides over our city' (*I.Priene* 46.20). Alexander dedicated her temple, which the city much later rededicated to her and the emperor Augustus; the construction was completed with the help of the Ephesian Megabyxos, son of Megabyxos and neokoros of Artemis.<sup>12</sup> He belonged to the Ephesian family that had been running the sanctuary of Artemis since Persian times; his connections might have helped to secure Alexander's funding.<sup>13</sup> Her sanctuary, situated on a terrace in the city centre above the agora, received the vast majority of the decrees that honoured the city's benefactors: it was the main place for efficient public display.<sup>14</sup> The same is true for statues of outstanding people, although the only example from Priene concerns an athlete who died abroad and whose father dedicated his image in the sanctuary of Athena Polias – since his grave was not in Priene, his memory could not be attached to a local grave monument, and a statue in the central city sanctuary was an efficient albeit somewhat unusual substitute, doubtless a tribute to the father's eminence.<sup>15</sup> The sanctuary also exhibited the statues of deserving former priestesses, as did the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, presumably the two most outstanding female priesthoods of the

12 Dedication of the sanctuary by Alexander *I.Priene* 156, expansion to Athena and Augustus 157 and 158; honorary decree of Megabyxos to reward him lavishly for his help with the temple *I.Priene* 3 (the crucial name of the goddess is a certain restoration); the base of the honorary statue promised by the authorities of Priene gives his function as νεωκόρος τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, *I.Priene* 231.

13 His father was the neokoros whom Xenophon entrusted with some of his booty, *Anab.* 5.3.4.2 and 5.3.8.3. The name is attested several times for noble Persians; cf. J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 353–6 ('The spelling and meaning of the name Megabyxos'). On the question of whether Megabyzos (*sic*, against the better evidence that argues for -byxos) ever was a priestly title in Ephesos (eunuch priests according to Strabo 14.1.23: at least the father of our Megabyxos cannot have been a eunuch, which scholars have overlooked) or rather was a personal name in the Ephesian priestly family, see J. O. Smith, 'The cult of Artemis at Ephesus', in E. N. Lane (ed.), *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 323–66 (most probably a personal name, not a title) and L. LiDonnici, 'The Ephesian Megabyzos priesthood and religious diplomacy at the end of the classical period', *Religion* 29 (1999), pp. 201–14 (a title, in a reassertion of the general opinion). The evidence favours Smith's reading.

14 For the archaeological record: Schede, *Die Ruinen von Priene*; N. A. Dontas and K. Ferla (eds), *Priene* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2005<sup>2</sup>, originally Athens: Foundation of the Hellenic World, s.a.). What moderns call the acropolis is a very steep hill that rises high above the city and was the site of the city's garrison.

15 *I.Priene* 288; *BCH* 52 (1928), pp. 399–406. More commonly, the relatives built a cenotaph; we do not know whether this was the case here as well.

city. Other sanctuaries appear rarely, such as the precinct of Asklepios or of Zeus Hypatos.<sup>16</sup>

Honorary decrees for foreigners sometimes indicate the places of display in their home cities, helping us to gauge the local importance of a precinct, such as the sanctuary of Apollo Klarios in Kolophon or of Artemis in Iasos, or of Athena in Alexandria in the Troas.<sup>17</sup> Only rarely do these documents allow the free choice of place by decreeing the display of an inscription or image 'in the most visible (or the most outstanding) place', 'ἐν τῷ ἐπιφανεστάτῳ (or ἐπισημοστάτῳ) τόπῳ'. This formula allows for presentation outside a sanctuary, although this is rare and the sanctuary remained the most commonly used space. For reasons unknown, an honorary decree from Priene is to be inscribed on the wall of a portico in the marketplace 'wherever the architect thinks fit' (*I.Priene* 107). The honoree must have had a special connection with the agora that eludes us, or his fellow citizens wanted to mark his eminent political importance, or they thought such a place was more visible than the interior of a sacred precinct.

The same mechanisms play out in the smaller epigraphical record of Gonnoi. Again, the main sanctuary was Athena's, built on the main city hill.<sup>18</sup> Dedications preserve her unspectacular cultic epithet, Polias: inscriptions usually preserve the unspectacular item, unlike the literary texts with their taste for the less common. Only once do we hear about another place of exhibition: a decree for a foreign judge was to be located in the sanctuary of Themis.<sup>19</sup> As usual, we are not given a reason for the location, but the connection between Themis and a judge is suggestive.<sup>20</sup>

Other sanctuaries in Gonnoi that are attested through a combination of ruins and a high concentration of inscriptions were dedicated to Artemis (inside the city) and to Asklepios (outside).<sup>21</sup> The inscriptions attest to more divinities, some with their priest, and there must have been more sanctuaries, but their locations escape us. In some cases, an individual altar might have been placed in a larger sanctuary: a dedication to Apollo Agreus, the Hunter, comes from the acropolis.

16 Dontas and Ferla, *Priene*, p. 112.

17 Apollo Klarios: *I.Priene* 57.7; Iasos: *I.Priene* 53.36; Alexandria: *I.Priene* 44.29.

18 For the excavated remains of the sanctuary on the main city hill (which disappeared during World War II) see Helly, *Gonnoi*, I, p. 30.

19 *I.Gonnoi* 69 (178 BC).

20 On Themis, with an emphasis on the literary record, see M. Corsano, *Themis: La norma e l'oracolo nella Grecia Antica* (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1988); J. Rudhardt, *Thémis et les Hôrai: Recherches sur les divinités grecques de la justice et de la paix* (Geneva: Droz, 1999).

21 Helly, *Gonnoi*, I, pp. 148–9.

The choice might seem random to us, since no known story combines Athena, Apollo and hunting; but the hunting gentlemen might have belonged to the civic power and military elite that was focused on Athena.

All this simply attests to the routine presence of space belonging to the gods in a Greek city and to the extent of prestige each divinity could display in a civic setting. Sanctuary space is well demarcated, safe, neutral, and visited by crowds who might be bored enough to read even a lengthy honorary decree. Sanctuary space also helped to articulate the relationship between a divinity and the city, as we can see in Priene, where the epigraphical record interacts with a very full archaeological ground plan. Some sanctuaries were in the city centre, close to agora and bouleuterion, the spaces for political and economic interactions: those of Athena Polias and Zeus Olympios, surprisingly perhaps also of Asklepios.<sup>22</sup> Others, often those founded and frequented by private associations, were tucked away in the residential quarters, such as the shrine of Egyptian gods with its inscriptions, or that of Kybele, whose presence is attested iconographically only. Others again were on the periphery: the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore was above the city centre below the acropolis (a common place for Demeter sanctuaries); the Hermaion was far outside the city space, on the border of the territory, as was a sacred grove of Apollo in Gonnoi;<sup>23</sup> and there was the cult of a protecting hero at Priene's city gate (above).

Everywhere, the space of the sanctuary is clearly marked off from non-sanctuary space, and boundary markers designate its circumference.<sup>24</sup> The land inside belonged to the divinity, in two senses. On the one hand, the god owned its real estate, both buildings and land, and he could rent out his land for cultivation; the revenue helped to pay expenses and even allowed the god to step in as the eponymous magistrate in time of economic distress, when no mortal felt able to

22 On the problem of whether the sanctuary of Zeus Olympios originally belonged to Asklepios see Dontas and Ferla, *Priene*, pp. 120–2: the identification is based on *I.Priene* 19, an honorary decree to be inscribed in the Asklepieion (ἐν τῇ παραστά[δῃ] τῆς στοᾶς τῆς ἐν τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ) that was found reused in the Byzantine fort near the agora (the second copy, on a marble stele in the sanctuary of Telon, is lost). The city centre is otherwise an unusual place for an Asklepieion, which is usually at the periphery and close to running water; see R. Martin and H. Metzger, *La religion grecque* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976), pp. 69–109; F. Graf, 'Heiligtum und Ritual: Das Beispiel der griechisch-römischen Asklepieia', in A. Schachter (ed.), *Le sanctuaire grec* (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1992), pp. 159–99.

23 Sanctuary of Athena: *I.Gonnoi* 93 B 11.

24 *I.Priene* 168 col. III.

stand for an office whose heavy expenses were notorious. In such an event, attested only for the cities in the Greek East, decrees were dated after the god. Sometimes, his full name was given, as often in the list of stephanephoroi in Miletos where Apollo appears several times – not because Apollo was the city protector (this role fell to Athena Polias with her central city temple), but because he was intimately connected with the stephanephoroi and the structure of power in the city.<sup>25</sup> Priene remains more laconic and usually dates more vaguely ἐπὶ στεφανηφόρου τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>26</sup> This god must be Zeus Olympios, with whom the stephanephoroi of Priene entertained a close relationship, ‘receiving [as one decree put it] from the people the eponymous wreath of Zeus Olympios’ (λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ δήμου τὸν ἐπώνυμον τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ολυμπίου στέφανον) as their emblem of office, sacrificing to him at the beginning of their tenure, and offering a dedication at the end.<sup>27</sup> As yet another stephanephoros, the god behaved like a human member of the landed urban elite, except that he officiated so often that one needed a specification in order to determine the year by naming his human predecessor: ἐπὶ στεφανηφόρου τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ μετὰ Κλεῖτον. Rarely (and never in Priene), the god could even share the office with a human; one hopes that they also shared the expenses.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, the god’s space is more than just real estate that guarantees a constant income to the temple. It has its own ritual properties that call for specific behaviour: this again helps with the ritual construction of the individual divinity. In most cases, the details of the ritual are determined by tradition, and the worshippers do not need a written reminder of what they had to do; they had learned it from their parents. But there are the cases when the divinity stands out from the rest of the pantheon as someone who demands special behaviour; the boundary marker then contained a short sacred law to

25 On the temple of Athena see A. Mallwitz, ‘Gestalt und Geschichte des jüngeren Athenatempels von Milet’, *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 25 (1975), pp. 67–90; on Apollo and the stephanephoroi see A. Herda, *Der Apollon-Delphinios-Kult in Milet und die Neujahrsprozession nach Didyma: Ein neuer Kommentar der sog. Molpoi-Satzung* (Mainz: Von Zabern, 2006).

26 *I. Priene* 4, 2 (a. 332/328); 4.49 (327/326); 201 a 1; 202. Other examples e.g. from Amyzon L. and J. Robert, *Fouilles d’Amyzon en Carie I* (Paris: De Boccard, 1983), nos. 14 (202 BC), 15 (201 BC), Herakleia under Latmos (*I. Priene* 51; *SEG* 37.859 B 1), Didyma (*I. Didyma* 199 and often) or Iasos *I. Iasos* 36 (224/223 BC).

27 Sign of office: *I. Priene* 114.21 (after 85 BC); sacrifice at the beginning of tenure: *I. Priene* 46, after tenure: *I. Priene* 187–9; on the monthly sacrifices to Zeus Olympios and Hera (and other divinities): *I. Priene* 108 (see below n. 109). The one female stephanephoros (who as ‘the first woman dedicated from her own money the water reservoir and the aqueducts in the city’) does not mention the divinity to whom she felt obliged, *I. Priene* 208; it might well have been Hera.

28 *Amyzon*, no. 15 (201 BC).

remind visitors of what was needed, most drastically on Chios: ἱγόν· οὐκ ἔσοδος (‘Sacred. No Entry’).<sup>29</sup> Neither Gonnoi nor Priene left such a boundary marker in its epigraphical record; in Priene, however, a small shrine had two inscriptions on one of its doorposts, one of them the injunction:

εἰσίνειν εἰς [τὸ] ἱερόν ἄγνόν ἐ[ν] ἑσθητί λευκ[ῇ].

Enter the sanctuary pure, in a white dress<sup>30</sup>

The sanctuary was embedded in the grid of the residential quarter where house abutted to house, with no open space between; this made a boundary marker impractical and unnecessary. But still there was a need to clarify the special conditions under which one should enter. Here, one thinks of an Egyptian deity, in whose cult a white linen dress was *de rigueur*.

There are more complex examples, but none from Priene or Gonnoi. A stone from the sanctuary of Hypatos on Paros combines border marker and special ritual injunction; it forbids entry to the uninitiated, and to women.<sup>31</sup> The god presided over an exclusively male group of worshippers who performed their cult far away from the city, somewhere on Mount Kynados; and they underwent a special initiation ritual.

In some cases, sanctuaries and their divine owners appear in contexts other than honorary decrees as well. Sanctuaries are obvious points of reference in space, especially outside the city. In a territorial dispute between Gonnoi and its neighbour Herakleia, a witness tells of sheep grazing in Apollo’s sanctuary somewhere along the disputed border<sup>32</sup> – obviously in a sacred grove: unlike a few other cities, Gonnoi did not prohibit the use of a grove for grazing sheep.<sup>33</sup> More commonly, the cities prohibited cutting down the trees or collecting the fallen wood, which belonged to the god and was presumably used for sacrificial pyres.<sup>34</sup> The border between Priene and Mykale was defined, among other things, by several shrines, of the goddess or heroine Mykale, of

29 *LSCG* 121 = *I.Chios* 11.

30 *I.Priene* 205; *LSAM* 35.

31 *IG XII* 5,183; *LSCG* 109. It is a stray find without archaeological context, and the assumption that the sanctuary was somewhere on the mountain rests mainly on the name of the divinity.

32 *I.Gonnoi* 93 B 11.

33 Prohibition e.g. *LSCG* 91 (Euboea), 116 (Chios).

34 On the protection of trees in sacred groves e.g. *LSCG* 37 (Attica, Apollo Erithaseios), 57 (Argos, Apollo Lykeios), 65.78–81 (Andania, Great Gods), 84 (Korope, Apollo Koropaios), 111 (Paros), 150 (Kos, Apollo Kyparissios).

Hermes and of Athena Samia, and there is also a place named 'Wall of Zeus', *Dios Teichos*, perhaps the remains of a Bronze Age wall with a myth attached to it (*I.Priene* 363). In a rare case, some sanctuaries (the sanctuary of Artemis in Ephesos and of Dionysos in Rhodes) are specified as the neutral meeting places of a foreign committee judging a territorial dispute between Priene and Samos,<sup>35</sup> or as places of safe keeping for money.<sup>36</sup>

Sanctuaries have priests, but a Greek city must have had more priests than the sanctuaries we have documented through their temples, to judge from the large number of priesthoods sold in one short period in Hellenistic Erythrai, a city whose size was comparable to Priene's (*I.Erythrai* 201). There must have been priests with altars only, but no temples: doubtless the gods sometimes had to be content with an altar in a larger sanctuary, or in an open space, and not only in the countryside where we might most expect it, such as Poseidon's altar at Cape Monodendri on the coast of Miletos, or the lonely altar that triggered the story of the Lycian peasants in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>37</sup> From Priene, we have an altar to Aphrodite Epekoos, 'She who listens', without any sanctuary connected with it; the excavators assume that it stood on the side of one of the city's main streets, there for all to see.<sup>38</sup> A few of Priene's priesthoods are visible through the decrees that regulated their sale; they concern Dionysos (for whom one priest is required to serve several cultic forms of the god), the Egyptian gods, and Poseidon Helikonios.<sup>39</sup> Deserving former priestesses of Athena and of Demeter and Kore received statues in their sanctuaries. We do not know why these priestesses and not others were chosen for such a commemoration, but we can guess that Athena's and Demeter's were the two most outstanding female priesthoods of the city: this reflects both their Panhellenic role and the fact that the two sanctuaries were among the most impressive of Priene.<sup>40</sup>

In Gonnoi, priests and priestesses are visible through their dedications only. They dedicate to their gods for public and private reasons. A few dedications exhibit the linguistic form (the aorist participle

35 *I.Priene* 37; the committee comes from Rhodes, and they specify that they also met on the disputed land itself, and 'in a garrison (φρουρίον) called Karion'.

36 *I.Priene* 39b (Orophernes).

37 Cape Monodendri: V. B. Gormann, *Miletos, the Ornament of Ionia: A History of the City to 400 B.C.E.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p. 207; Lycian peasants: Ov. *Met.* 6.325–6.

38 *I.Priene* 169: 'ein primitiver Strassenaltar'.

39 *LSAM* 36 (*I.Priene* 195), 37 (*I.Priene* 174), 38 (*I.Priene* 201–2).

40 On the sanctuary of Athena, see Dontas and Ferla, *Priene*, pp. 86–11; of Demeter, *ibid.*, pp. 126–35.



ιερατεύσας or ιερατεύσασα) that indicates a dedication at the end of a term of office, twice from a priest of Asklepios, once from the priestess of an unknown deity after her second term;<sup>41</sup> we sense gratitude for this achievement.<sup>42</sup> Private reasons are behind the dedication of the priest of Athena Polias (*I. Gonnoi* 151) and the priestess of Artemis Euonymos (*I. Gonnoi* 167); another priestess thanks Artemis Eulochia (presumably the goddess she serves) for help with her children (*I. Gonnoi* 173).

### SACRED LAWS

Prescriptions about correct ritual behaviour are not confined to boundary markers alone; they are either the main topic or a part of other documents as well, many of which originate as decrees of the local assembly or of a private body organized around a specific cult.<sup>43</sup> Often, they were exhibited in the sanctuary with which they were concerned, either in their entirety or in a relevant digest; Pausanias saw such a law in the sanctuary of Hyrnetho in Argos and summarized its main provisions.<sup>44</sup> Modern scholarship, going as far back as the late nineteenth century, called such prescriptions ‘sacred laws’, *lois sacrées*, *leges sacrae*. In so far as such prescriptions are not just part of public decrees, laws, of which sacred laws then would be a subcategory, the term is problematical and has recently been questioned; but it has some heuristic advantage if only to help to structure the mass of epigraphical texts, and should not be discarded easily.<sup>45</sup>

Priene preserved three decrees like this. Two decrees of the assembly regulate the sale of a priesthood, of Dionysos Phleas in one case, of Poseidon Helikonios in another. The former is a well-preserved excerpt of such a decree, with the title διαγραφὴ Διονύσου Φλέου, ‘Ordinance of Dionysos Phleas’.<sup>46</sup> It omits all technicalities such as the date of the assembly, the officials, the mover of the decree and the decision on its display; instead, it adds the name of the buyer and the price he paid, things known only after the assembly had finished. The inscription thus served both as a record of the transaction

41 *I. Gonnoi* 197 and 198 (Asklepios), 210.

42 An uncertain case, *AnnEpig* 1914, 15.211.

43 Not necessarily identical with the distinction between polis cult and private cult.

44 Paus. 2.28.7; Pirenne-Delforge, *Retour à la source*, p. 132.

45 See E. Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2009<sup>2</sup>), and R. Parker, ‘What are sacred laws?’, in E. M. Harris and L. Rubinstein (eds), *The Law and the Courts in Ancient Greece* (London: Duckworth, 2004), pp. 57–70.

46 *I. Priene* 174 = *LSAM* 37 (second century BC).

and as a reminder of the rules under which the incumbent officiated; since the office lasted as long as he lived, such a reminder had its use. The second is preserved in two copies, a full decree and an excerpt.<sup>47</sup> Neither of these two laws is interested in the divinity, but instead in the duties and privileges of the future buyer of the priesthood. But since the priest of Dionysos Phleos also had to perform the sacrifices for Dionysos Katagogios and for Dionysos Melpomenos in the theatre, we grasp a hierarchy among the different cults of Dionysos in the city, which was reflected in the incidence of cult (sacrifices throughout the year versus sacrifices connected with specific events such as theatrical performances only) and perhaps in the organization of sacred space (sanctuary versus an altar only in the theatre). This does not mean, however, that a lesser hierarchical position makes a specific cult less relevant for the city: the duty in the cult of Dionysos Melpomenos was 'to perform sacrifices for Dionysos Melpomenos in the theatre, to burn incense, to lead the libation and to say the prayers for the citizens of Priene'.<sup>48</sup> The occasion that assembled the people of Priene in their theatre did not serve for entertainment only but was also supposed to bring them divine blessings. Poseidon Helikonios in turn was worshipped in the Panionion, whose administration was in the hands of little Priene;<sup>49</sup> the texts, identical except for the technical introduction of the decree, again deal with the duties and privileges of the buyer and refer to a decree of the Ionians on the cult that must have been displayed in the Panionion.<sup>50</sup>

The very fragmentary third decree regards the priest of the Egyptian gods from whose sanctuary it comes; the introduction is lost, but it was most probably issued again from the public assembly to determine the details of the priesthood when it came up for sale. The gods whose names are preserved are 'Sarapis, Isis and the gods with them'; one of them, as we can read later, was Apis. These immigrant gods retained their Egyptian cult forms, to judge from the detail that 'the priest also provides an Egyptian who will help to perform the sacrifice expertly; it is forbidden for anyone else to perform the sacrifice for the goddess without expertise, except for the priest'. We know of similar rules from elsewhere: part of the attraction of the Egyptian gods was

47 Poseidon *I.Priene* 201 and 202; *LSAM* 38 (second century BC).

48 *I.Priene* 174.15–19, θύσει δὲ καὶ τὰς θυσίας τὰς ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ τῷ Διονύσῳ τῷ Μελομένῳ καὶ λιβανωτὸν ἐπιθήσει καὶ σπονδαρχήσει καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς εὔξεται ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως τῆς Πριηνέων.

49 Regulations for the priesthood of the god: *I.Priene* 201 and 202 (= *LSAM* 38); see also *I.Priene* 203; on the archaeological record: G. Kleiner, P. Hommel and W. Müller-Wiener, *Panionion und Melie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967).

50 *I.Priene* 201.8–9. The decree guarantees the privileges and curses whoever attempts to diminish them, which seems to point to tensions inside the federation.

their exoticism, which might have promised special power.<sup>51</sup> But it has to be underlined that the city guaranteed this exoticism, if the decree really was issued by the assembly; there was no dichotomy of values between 'Hellenic' and foreign cultic identity.

### THE MANY NAMES OF THE GODS

Greek gods, at least the major Greek gods, were worshipped in specific local forms, and these forms were defined by cultic epithets or, in the Hellenizing term I prefer, by epicleses, 'surnames' or 'names of invocation'.<sup>52</sup> In Priene, as we have just seen, Dionysos was worshipped as Dionysos Phleos, Melpomenos, Katagogios, all served by the same priest, but on clearly distinguished occasions. Dionysos Katagogios is the god who presides over one specific festival, the Katagogia, which celebrates his arrival from the sea;<sup>53</sup> Dionysos Melpomenos, 'He who sings and dances', received sacrifices and prayers 'for the city of Priene' in the theatre, presumably during the same Dionysia when the city announced public honours.<sup>54</sup> These cults then were narrowly confined, unlike the worship of Dionysos Phleos, who dominated the local Dionysos cult to the extent that his priest could simply call himself 'priest of Dionysos' (*I.Priene* 177). The person who bought it for the quite astonishing sum of 12,002 drachmai was a leading member of the civic elite, a benefactor who served as an ambassador, was father and father-in-law of priestesses of Athena Polias, and valued the priesthood and the income it provided enough to stipulate that his son should be his successor.<sup>55</sup>

Epicleses are very often easy to understand, and they very often define a god's function, as do Melpomenos and Katagogios. Phleos, a widespread epiclesis in Ionia, is more opaque: ancient grammarians

51 *I.Priene* 195 (=LSAM 36), 20–3. The Delian cult of Sarapis was in the hands of an immigrant priestly family; the grandson of the founder experienced the helpful (and, to his adversaries, devastating) power of the god; cf. H. Engelmann, *The Delian Aretalogy of Sarapis* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

52 I prefer this term, commonly used by Pausanias, to the more clumsy term 'cultic epithet' to differentiate it from the poetic or literary epithet; I retain 'epithet' in the latter sense only. Recent discussions of the topic: P. Brulé, 'Le langage des épicleses dans le polythéisme hellénique', *Kernos* 11 (1998), pp. 13–34, and R. Parker, 'The problem of the Greek cult epithet', *Opuscula Atheniensia* 28 (2003), pp. 173–83.

53 *I.Priene* 174.5; details on the Katagogia, *ibid.*, 21–2 and, for Miletos, LSAM 48.21; still important is Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, p. 416. In Priene, they are one of the three festivals of the god, together with the Anthesteria and the Lenaia.

54 *I.Priene* 174.15–19; Dionysia and honours, *I.Priene* 47, 50, 53, 60.

55 Athenopolis, son of Kydimos, as benefactor *I.Priene* 107, 177; ambassador *I.Priene* 138.6; priestesses of Athena Polias *I.Priene* 162.

connected the name with φλέω, 'to teem with abundance', which they explained with the synonym εὐκαρπέω, 'to bring a rich harvest' (*Et. Mag.* 796.43): the god was connected with nature's abundance, and his major festivals in Priene must have been the Anthesteria and the Lenaia, the latter connected with the first wine, the former with the flowers of spring. Accordingly, the Ephesians combined his cult with the cult of Demeter Karpophoros, 'She who brings fruit'.<sup>56</sup>

Some epicleses are almost universal and represent a divine function all Greeks recognized and expected the divinity to perform, such as Athena Polias, 'She of the polis', or Hestia Boulaia, 'She of the council'.<sup>57</sup> Others are unique but easily understood, such as Eukarpia, 'She of the rich harvest', an epiclesis of Ge in Gonnoi (*I. Gonnoi* 203): the word is well attested as a noun and as a personal name (Eukarpia for women, Eukarpides for men) all over Greece, and poetry gives the epithet to Aphrodite, Demeter and Dionysos.<sup>58</sup> Thus, one could expect it to go with Ge in more than one place, but this is not the case, because the goddess does not receive much cult in Greek cities, and often in unusual forms.<sup>59</sup> Sometimes, such epicleses build on more common ones, such as the epiclesis Eulochia, given to the birth goddess Artemis in Gonnoi as a variation of the more widely attested Lochia; in unique cases like this, we cannot even know whether this was an *ad hoc* change by a grateful individual or whether this was Artemis' cult name in Gonnoi.<sup>60</sup>

Other epicleses again are unique and defy our understanding, such as Apollo Aisonios, attested in several private dedications from Gonnoi.<sup>61</sup> The epiclesis derives from the personal name Aison and might thus point to an association or a clan cult funded by one Aison. Apollo often presides over clan groups, and the fact that the oldest

56 *I. Ephes.* 1595, see F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome: Swiss Institute, 1985), pp. 283–4.

57 Athena Polias: *I. Priene* 157, 160, 161, 164; *I. Gonnoi* 147–51; Hestia Boulaia: *I. Priene* 116.

58 Eukarpia in poetry: Soph. frg. 487 Radt (Aphrodite); *Anth. Pal.* 6.31 (Dionysos, together with Pan and Deo Chthonia in a prayer for fertility of flocks, fields and vineyards), 7.394 (Demeter; epigram on a millstone).

59 The closest epigraphical parallel is Gê Pankarpos: *I. Lindos* 456, first century AD.

60 Eulochia: *I. Gonnoi* 173. Lochia: Athens *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4547 (c.400 BC, with other birth divinities); Thespiiai: P. Roesch, *Les inscriptions de Thespies*, fasc. I–VIII. Édition électronique. Histoire et sources des mondes antiques (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux, 2007), no. 249 (c.200 BC, Artemis Eileithyia and Lochia); Larissa *SEG* 37. 487 (third century AD); Macedonia *SEG* 47. 902 (Karyochorion, first/second century AD, dedication after birth); *Stobi* I (1973) 152 no. 3 and 181 no. 7 (Stoboi, imperial period); Pergamon *CIG* 3562 and *I. Pergamon* 311; poetical Delphi *BCH* 80 (1956), pp. 550–4.

61 A list in *SEG* 53 (2003). 529 and 530.

dedication comes from a group (whose name is lost) could confirm this if this group can be seen as somehow related to the overarching group. All other dedications, however, result from a private vow and do not help our understanding. From the fact that one dedication is on the frame of a painting that depicts three or four figures in a boat, one scholar concluded that this Apollo was a patron of seamen, and he adduced another singular epiclesis of Apollo from Gonnoi, Panlimnios, as affording a parallel.<sup>62</sup> This latter can be understood as ‘He of all harbours’, from λιμήν, ‘harbour’, in a syncopated form (instead of -λιμένιος), as we have Poseidon Epilimnios; or ‘He of all lakes’, from λίμνη, ‘lake, pool’ (although λιμναῖος would be better, but there is τὸ λίμνιον, ‘the small lake, the pond’); παν-, ‘all’, is difficult in both cases. But there is neither a harbour nor a lake near Gonnoi (although river harbours are more common in Thessaly than we would think): thus, the epiclesis could also hide a geographical name, making Apollo the patron of a locally focused group or association, or it could come from the specific Thessalian meaning of λιμήν as ‘open space, agora’.<sup>63</sup> The discussion highlights our problems when dealing with a unique epiclesis, not much context, and difficult linguistic choices.

In many cases, a specific epiclesis has a distribution that attests to regional cultic specialisms. In Gonnoi, a group of *sussitōi*, ‘co-banqueters’, offer a private dedication to Apollo Agreus, god of the hunt; they must be landed gentlemen who hunted and dined together, with the hunt defining local elites in the same way as it did in Macedonia.<sup>64</sup> A similar hunters’ club is attested in Mylai, about 40 kilometres inland and upriver from Gonnoi, and Apollo Agreus received an isolated dedication in Atrax, a few kilometres south of Mylai. Again, local worship defines the perception and construction of a divinity, although Apollo is patron of hunters also in literary texts, together with his hunting sister.<sup>65</sup> Dionysos Phleus or Phleos

62 SEG 29.515 Ἀπόλλωνι Πανλιμνίῳ Δημοκρίτα Ἀντιόχου.

63 Poseidon Epilimnios Hsch. s.v.; see also IG II<sup>2</sup> 1225.13 τὸ ἐπιλίμνιον; Steph. Byz. ss.vv. gives a place Limnaia and two places called Limnai. For λιμήν, ‘agora’, in Thessaly, Dio Chrys. Or. 11.24 and IG IX 2.517.24; Hsch. s.v. attributes this meaning to the Paphians; more in J. L. García Ramón, ‘Der thessalische Name *Spyragos*, *spyros* “Weizen(korn)” und att. *pyros*, *pyrous agein* “Weizen(korn) zu Wasser transportieren”’, in G. Schweiger (ed.), *Indogermanica: Festschrift Gert Klingenschmitt* (Tübingen: Schweiger, 2005), pp. 127–43 at 138–9; see pp. 136–7 for river harbours. (I thank Jan Bremmer for directing my attention to the last explanation.)

64 I. Gonnoi 159; the names (Antimachos, Aristodemos, Kritodemos) sound upper-class. On Macedonia and the hunt see M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Cultes et rites de passage en Macedoine* (Athens: Centre de Recherche de l’Antiquité Grecque et Romaine, 1994), pp. 87–111.

65 Apollo Agreus and his *syssitōi* also in Thessalian Mylai, IG IX 2, 332; alone in Atrax, SEG 35.491; unclear in the supplement in IG II<sup>2</sup> 5018; Agreutes in Chios,

is attested in Priene, Chios and Ephesos, and the name recurs in varying forms in late lexica, without clear provenance but with an often repeated story that makes Phlious, the eponymous founder of the Peloponnesian city, a son of Dionysos.<sup>66</sup> Phlious lies far out from the narrowly circumscribed area where Dionysos Phleus is attested, and one is tempted to assume that the Phlious story is a learned improvisation, based on the similarity of the names.<sup>67</sup> But the pattern is not always as clear cut as this. Zeus is called Aithrios in Priene, Byzantion, in a village near Kyzikos in Mysia and (perhaps; the stone is broken) in Boeotian Thespiiai.<sup>68</sup> The *aithêr* as Zeus' domain is as old as Homer, and the spread of the attestations might reflect the idea of Zeus as the god of the clear sky, although at least in literature he was eclipsed by Helios, the natural denizen of the fiery upper sky.<sup>69</sup>

The decree of Priene sheds some light on the question how the Greeks understood what we perceive as a tension between the cultic personalities of a god as defined by epicleses and the overarching mythical personality expressed in his 'proper' name. In cult, we deal with what are almost three gods, with specific cultic personalities; but the citizens all lumped them together under one regulation, and the priest could see himself simply as priest of Dionysos.

To an even higher degree, the same tension between particular cult and overall divine personality is visible in the cases where the same term is sometimes used as an epiclesis and sometimes as a divine name, such as Hypatos in the Parian sacred law cited above. Hypatos, 'Most high', is much more common as an epiclesis of Zeus; his cult is attested, among others, in an unknown town somewhere in western Asia Minor whose judges served Priene and received an honorary

(footnote 65 continued)

*I. Chios* 15 (see Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 57–8). The siblings as patrons of the hunt: Xen. *Ven.* 1.1, cf. 6.13 (Apollon and Artemis Agrotera) and Arrian. *Ven.* 35.3 (Artemis Agrotera, Apollo, Pan and other gods of the wilderness); Apollo alone: Aesch. fr. 200 Radt (Herakles' prayer before shooting); *Anth. Pal.* 6.152. See also Suid. A 380.

66 Φλέων Ael. *VH* 3.41; Φλῖος Et. Mag. 539.32 = Herodian. *De orthographia* 4.14, cf. Herodian. *De prosodia* 3.1; Φλιούς Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1.115; Φλεῦς Herodian. *De prosodia* 3.1 and Arcad. *De accentibus* 145.

67 The alternation -εύς/-ε(ι)ός is attested in Ionian, e.g. ἰερεός instead of ἰερεὺς in Chios.

68 Priene: *I. Priene* 184, 185; two dedications. Byzantium: A. Łajtar, *Die Inschriften von Byzantion* (Bonn: Habelt, 2000), no. 19 (dedication, first century BC). Kyzikene: *SEG* 33.1052 = M. Barth and J. Stauber (eds), *Inschriften Mysia und Troas* (Munich: Leopold Wenger Institut, Universität München, 1996), no. 1563 (dedication, second century BC). Thespiiai: Roesch, *Les inscriptions de Thespies*, no. 255 (third century BC).

69 *Il.* 15.192 (see Aristot. *De mundo* 400 a 19); Theocr. 4.43; Nonn. *Dion.* 8.50.

decree in their local sanctuary of Zeus Hypatos (*I.Priene* 71). These cases seem to offer themselves to two possible interpretations: as a shorthand expression, or as the local attestation of a minor divinity (a *Sondergott* in Hermann Usener's model) that in other places was fused with a major Olympian divinity.

Different cases might lend themselves to different interpretations. Abbreviations are amply illustrated by literary texts, but also sometimes in other documents. In literary texts, the context ordinarily makes it clear that we are dealing with an abbreviation for the full combination of divine name plus epithet, such as the almost ubiquitous Pythios for Apollo,<sup>70</sup> and the same often holds true for other documents. When Delphic inscriptions talk about Pythios or Lykeios, we can safely assume that they mean Apollo and not a *Sondergott*; and when coins write *Eleutherios* or *Klarios* next to an image of Zeus or Apollo, they abbreviate the obvious full name because of lack of space – the latter coins were issued by Kolophon with its famous Klarian oracle.<sup>71</sup> The same holds true for a very fragmentary dedication from Priene to Phytalmios. The epithet is rare and confined to Poseidon; if his name has not been lost in the lacuna in the first line, the dedicator abbreviated the name.<sup>72</sup>

Other cases are trickier, and do not allow for an easy solution. Gonnoi and other Thessalian cities worshipped the goddess Ennodia, 'Lady of the road'. In the cults of other cities, inside and outside of Thessaly, she is called Artemis Ennodia, and in some literary texts, she is even identified as Hekate.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, the women of Gonnoi worshipped Artemis Eileithyia, 'She of the coming', whose name is used independently as often, as that of a minor deity specializing in childbirth.<sup>74</sup> Things, then, are untidy, and we should not let ourselves be seduced into believing that the women of Gonnoi who called Ennodia necessarily understood her to be either a form of Artemis or of Hekate, or Eileithyia always as Artemis – or some did,

70 This is not to say that literary texts never present the problem: see Soteira in *Ar. Ran.* 374, explained by the scholion as Athena; modern scholars do not all agree.

71 Eleutherios: Metapont, Head 77; Klarios: Kolophon, Head 571.

72 *I.Priene* 366, from Mykale; see also a dedication from Ios, *IG XII* 5, 15.

73 Ennodia: *I.Gonnoi* 201; for the entire Thessalian file, see P. Chrysostomou, *Hê Thessalikê thea En(n)odia hê Pheraia thea* (Athens: Tameio Archaïologikon Poron, 1998); Artemis Ennodia e.g. Demetrias (Thessaly) *SEG* 48, 658; Epidauros, *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1. 273, 274, 500; Koptos (Egypt) *OGIS* 53 = A. Bernand, *Les portes du désert: Recueil des inscriptions grecques d'Antinooupolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Apollonopolis Parva et Apollonopolis Magna* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984), no. 47.

74 *I.Gonnoi* 175–96. On Eileithyia as a birth goddess see T. H. Price, *Kourotrophos: Cults and Representations of the Greek Nursing Deities* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

and others did not: Panhellenic identification might well be a matter of education. Local perceptions can remain complex and ambiguous, or outright untouched by such wider concerns.<sup>75</sup>

Still, a few trends can be glimpsed from a quick look at the epigraphical record, although much more systematic work would be needed. Some epicleses have more tendency to stand alone than others, such as the clearly functional Soteira (epiclesis of Athena, Artemis, Hera, Hygieia etc.), or those of Zeus as god of weather and mountain tops. An example is a sacred law from Chios that dealt with the duties of the priest of Pelinaios.<sup>76</sup> Hesychius explains the word as an epiclesis of 'Zeus on Chios', whose highest mountain peak is Mount Pelinaios, τὸ Πελινᾶϊον ὄρος, in the north of the island; Chian inscriptions do not attest to such a Zeus.<sup>77</sup> I am not sure what this means for Greek religious psychology – does it indicate a feeling that some aspects of Zeus are so important or so unusual that one prefers to keep them distant from him? Or does the case of Soteira point to the feeling of the worshippers that they know who saved them and that this fact, not the overall divine name, is what counts? A dedication from Roman Epidauros could confirm this. A patient dedicated a statue 'to my Saviourress (*Soteira*) and to Telesphoros'. We do not know who Soteira was; the image, now lost, might have clarified whether the dedicant meant Hygieia or Artemis, who are both attested in the Epidaurian sanctuary, or yet another divinity.<sup>78</sup>

Epicleses are also reflected in theophoric names, and since these names are thought to be an indicator of a god's popularity, their frequency in a specific place can be important.<sup>79</sup> The rarer the epi-

75 I doubt, however, that locals could shift between the possibilities in the space of one inscription, as in the heavily restored *IG* XII:9,1193 Λυσανίας Κορίλου | [Ἀρτέμιδι Ἐ]νοδίαι {I} | [Θεσσαλός] ἐκ Φακίου | [ — — — ]ρα Πολεμο| — — — | ἱέρεια ἀνέ|[θηκεν Ἐ]νοδίαι. The coexistence of the two forms would be unique, not least for a Thessalian; ἀνέθηκεν is a far better supplement in line 2.

76 *SEG* 17.377; *LSS* 129; *I.Chios* 4, late fifth century.

77 Hsch. s.v. ; the mountain in Strabo 14.1.35 and St. B. s.v.

78 *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.570 (imperial period); Artemis: *ibid.* 277, 506, 516, and W. Peek, *Neue Inschriften aus Epidauros* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972), no. 56; Hygieia *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.419 (AD 297).

79 R. Parker, 'Theophoric names and the history of Greek religion', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 104 (2000), pp. 53–79, referring back to J.-A. Letronne, in *Mémoires de l'Institut National de France (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres)* 19 (1851), pp. 1–139, and E. Sittig, 'De Graecorum nominibus theophoris' (dissertation, Halle, 1911). Neither Priene nor Gonnoi presents surprising statistics. In Priene, as in other Ionian cities, Apollo is leading with 13.7 per cent of all theophoric names, plus another 4 per cent for names with *Pythio-*, closely trailed by Zeus, whose different forms (*Dio*, *Zeno-*) add up to about 13 per cent; perhaps somewhat more surprisingly, the next divinity is Hera, with 6.9 per cent of all theophoric names. Gonnoi was much less given to theophoric names and



clesis, the more interesting its use in a personal name; widespread epicleses such as the ones reflected in Pythodoros or Olympiodoros barely deserve notice. A rare name is borne by Ouliades, son of Apollodotos: the name derives from Oulios, a mostly Ionian epiclesis of healing Apollo; as such, it is mainly, but not exclusively, attested in the Greek East.<sup>80</sup> Paionios, another unique name in Priene that is also predominantly Eastern, derives from Paion, another epiclesis of healing Apollo, rather than from the independent Bronze Age (and perhaps Homeric) god Paiawon.<sup>81</sup> Other names reflect festivals, such as Apatourios in Priene, Thargelios in nearby Herakleia;<sup>82</sup> Apatouria and Thargelia are festivals that are typical of Ionians and Athenians, as are the months Apatourion and Thargelion.<sup>83</sup> One could imagine that a birthday on a festival day might be responsible for the personal name; but it is up to one's personal taste to judge whether nine known bearers of this name from Priene over three centuries strain probability or not.

But it is impossible to use personal names alone to claim a specific cult or festival for a city in which the cult is not otherwise attested. The cult of Apollon Oulios is known for Miletos, Delos and Kos, and thus could be called Eastern Greek, albeit not exclusively Ionian. The personal name Ouliades has a wider occurrence, in Athens, the Aegean islands and western Anatolia, with a statistically significant peak in the southwest, a distribution that has a firm centre and a periphery of occasional occurrences.<sup>84</sup> Personal names travel with their bearers to

preferred aristocratic sounding ones; among the theophoric names, however, Asklepios is easily in the lead.

80 *I.Priene* 47.30; the Priene Corpus also attests Ouliades, a historiographer from Samos, 37.120, another one from Herakleia, 51.8, and a third from an unknown city in the region, 42.1. See also below, n. 84.

81 *I.Priene* 144.30, see 313.240. On Paion/Paian and Apollo, see F. Graf, *Apollo* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 81–2.

82 Apatourios: nine instances, *I.Priene* 228; Thargelios: *I.Priene* 15.

83 C. Trümper, *Untersuchungen zu den altgriechischen Monatsnamen und Monatsfolgen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp. 10–24.

84 Delos and Miletos: Strabo 14.2.6; Kos: *ASAA* 41/42 (1963/4), 159 no. 4. The names: nine examples come from Athens, over 150 from the Greek islands and western Anatolia, with a high concentration in the southwest (fifteen from Rhodes alone, six from Samos, including a doctor, Ouliades son of Ouliades, honoured on Amorgos; *IG* XII 7.231). In Velia, to complicate things, the philosopher Parmenides is called Ouliades, which must make him the member of a local medical guild; G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Tra Cadmo e Orfeo: contributi alla storia civile e religiosa dei greci d'occidente* (Bologna: Mulino, 1990, originally 1963), pp. 269–80; see also J. G. Vinogradov, 'Heilkundige Eleaten in den Schwarzmeergründungen', in M. Dreher (ed.), *Bürgersinn und staatliche Macht in Antike und Gegenwart: Festschrift für Wolfgang Schuller zum 65. Geburtstag* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 2000), pp. 133–49, for the arrival of the name on the Black Sea.

a new city, where they might be handed down in a family in which the grandfather and not Apollo the Healer is crucial for the tradition. The Prienean Ouliades, son of Apollodotos, reflects a knowledge of Apollo the Healer, whereas the Pisidian Ouliades, father of Midas, might have been given a prestigious Greek name whose religious connotation remained unknown.<sup>85</sup> The latter quite certainly does not allow us to postulate a local cult of Apollo Oulios; the former might give us the possibility, with all due caution.

### A RARE CULT

In second-century BC Priene, a man and a woman dedicated a statue of their father, ‘the priest of Basileus and the Kouretes’.<sup>86</sup> A dedication to this same group by a priestess of the Kouretes has been found in Volissos on Chios.<sup>87</sup> The juxtaposition of these two texts with these rare recipients of cult raises two intriguing questions.

One is the relationship between the two texts, and their origin – a very basic question that sometimes attaches itself to epigraphical documents. Either the two inscriptions attest to very similar cults in Priene and on Chios, or they come from the same ancient city, one being a *pierre errante*, one of those stones used as ballast by empty cargo boats sailing up and down the eastern rim of the Aegean; a third possibility would be that they are both *pierres errantes*. This third possibility is the most unsettling one, but can be excluded. Although the Chios stone was not found *in situ*, the Priene base was: it was excavated on the agora near the stairs that lead to the sanctuary of Athena Polias and was placed there, in a choice spot for exhibition.<sup>88</sup> A decision between the remaining two possibilities is not easy. The fact that in the Priene text Basileus and the Kouretes together have a priest, while in the Chian inscription the Kouretes alone have a priestess, does not necessarily militate against a common origin: in Didyma, the Kouretes had both a priest and a priestess, as had the Korybantes in Erythrai.<sup>89</sup> Volissos is a harbour town; the Chian stone might well have arrived from Priene.

The other problem is how to understand the cult group. The

85 *Denkschriften Wien* 102 (1978), 6 no. 1 B 10.

86 *I.Priene* 186, Βασιλείδης καὶ Καλλινίκη | τὸν αὐτῶν πατέρα | Ἀπολλόδορον Ποσειδωνίου | ἱερητεύοντα Βασιλεῖ | καὶ Κούρησιν.

87 *I.Chios* \*1 (*Hesperia* 16, 1947, pp. 87–8). I summarize and amend my discussion in Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 118–20.

88 *I.Priene* 186 gives as find spot ‘gefunden in situ an der NW-Ecke der Agora, beim Aufgang zum Tempel’.

89 Priest: *I.Didyma* 277 (c. AD 220/300); priestess: *I.Didyma* 182 (c. AD 230), 370 (late imperial epoch). Erythrai: *I.Erythrai* 207.

Kouretes as recipients of cult must be the mythical beings and not the sacred functionaries that are attested in Ephesian inscriptions dating to the imperial epoch but with earlier antecedents.<sup>90</sup> As such, they are well attested in neighbouring Miletos.<sup>91</sup> Building on this, it is tempting to understand Basileus as an abbreviated form of Zeus Basileus: in myth, the Kouretes danced around the future king Zeus to protect him from his father. Although the Priene base was located next to the steps of the sanctuary of Athena, to the northwest above the agora, the sanctuary of Zeus Olympios was not far away, bordering the eastern limit of the marketplace; but this is a weak argument at best. Zeus in such a group is attested in the region, which might again be an argument against a Chian cult, Chios being rather outside the other mainly Carian attestation, and an argument for reading Basileus as a form of Zeus. Zeus Kretagenes, 'born on Crete', and the Kouretes are combined in Hellenistic Mylasa.<sup>92</sup> The new poem from Halicarnassos locates the birth of Zeus there; his protectors danced around him, and as a reward 'Father Zeus made the sons of Earth famous ritual attendants (πρόσπολοι) who are serving in the secret dwelling'.<sup>93</sup> Halicarnassos, that is, has a mystery cult that centres on the local Zeus and his protectors, the Kouretes; the first couplet of the epigram defined the god as Zeus Akraios.<sup>94</sup> The cult is legitimized by a local version of Zeus' birth and early childhood story, as the Ephesian cult is legitimized by a local story of Artemis' birth; other cities along the Aegean east coast (Skepsis, Pergamon, Smyrna, Tralleis) have their own claims on Zeus' birth.<sup>95</sup>

It is intriguing, however, to find several other attestations of a being named King, βασιλεύς, in the wider region. There was a 'sanctuary of

90 Collected in D. Knibbe, *Der Staatsmarkt: Die Inschriften des Prytaneions* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981); see F. Graf, 'Ephesische und andere Kureten', in H. Friesinger and F. Krinziger (eds), *100 Jahre österreichische Forschungen in Ephesos* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), pp. 255–62.

91 *Milet* I:2 no. 24 (= *I.Didyma* 388); *I.Milet* 1384; *I.Didyma* 131, 182.9, 277, 388.3.

92 *I.Mylasa* 102. 107; Olymos: *I.Mylasa* 806.

93 Isager and Pedersen, *The Salmakis Inscription*, p. 217, lines 11–12.

94 On the epigram see above, n. 8. It needs to be stressed that 'mystery cult' simply means a secret cult, admission into which is controlled by special rites; see F. Graf, 'Lesser mysteries – not less mysterious', in M. B. Cosmopoulos (ed.), *Greek Mysteries* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 241–62.

95 Artemis in Ephesos: Strabo 14.1.20. Zeus: Pergamon, in an oracle from Klaros: Merkelbach-Stauber 6 no. 2; Skepsis in the Troas: only literary mentions: Dem. Scephs. 18; Steph. Byz. s.v. Skepsis; Smyrna: Aristid. *Or.* 17.3 Keil, see also *Or.* 20.2 and *Or.* 21.3; Lydia/Tmolus/Sardes: Io. Lyd. *Mens.* 4.71; Tralles: Zeus Larasios, coins in A. Laumonier, *Les cultes indigènes en Carie* (Paris: De Boccard, 1958), p. 505 with note.

the king', ἱερὸν βασιλέως, outside of Ephesos, at the mouth the river Kayster, said to be a foundation of king Agamemnon.<sup>96</sup> A citizen of Miletos dedicated an altar 'to the king who listens', Βασιλεῖ ἐπηκόῳ, in late imperial times.<sup>97</sup> The city of Kaunos, now miles inland, in antiquity a harbour city to the south of the Knidian peninsula, worshipped a divine Basileus or βασιλεὺς Καύνιος as a major city god.<sup>98</sup> Each case deserves its own study. The Ephesian sanctuary might have taken its name from its founder, king Agamemnon, or from its superhuman owner, or both. The Milesian dedication is late and isolated; the 'king who listens' might well be the Anatolian Men, as Pleket thought.<sup>99</sup> The Kaunian case can be seen, in a synchronic perspective, as again the problem of epiclesis vs. divine name, as in the cases of Ennodia or Soteira using a noun that is clearly understandable: natives might or might not have identified their local king with Zeus. In a diachronic perspective and in a region of cultural contacts and overlays between Greek and Anatolian traditions, scholars explained the name Basileus by Greek interpretations of non-Greek facts.<sup>100</sup> This explanation might find corroboration in the fact that the Kouretes were not the only all-male mythical and ritual group in the region. Even if we disregard the Rhodian Telchines, there are the Korybantes, whose cult is attested in several cities of the region: a mystery cult is described in several inscriptions from Hellenistic Erythrai, and much shorter attestations come from Pergamon, Miletos, Halikarnassos, Bargylia, Rhodes and Cos. In late imperial Miletos (or Didyma), Kouretes and Korybantes seem to be interchangeable; in Pergamon and Skepsis, we also hear of Zeus' birth, doubtless as the myth for their cult.<sup>101</sup> At

96 Strabo 14.1.26 p. 642.

97 Basileus: *Milet* I:7, no. 285 (see *SEG* 4.425). An imperial dedication from Miletos is addressed to βασιλεὺς ἀναξ, *I. Milet* 1304. Anax is regarded as the first king of Miletos, after whom the city was called Anaktoria, Paus. 7.2.5 and Steph. Byz. s.v. Miletos; this makes it likely that the dedication should be understood as a thanksgiving 'to king Anax'; see Laumonier, *Les cultes indigènes*, p. 540 with n. 1, and Ehrhardt in his comments on *I. Milet* 1034'.

98 *SEG* 14. 639 c 13, d 4; 649 b 6; *Fouilles de Xanthos* VI no. 32 lines 7, 17, and no. 53 lines 7, 17.

99 H. W. Pleket, 'Religious history as a history of mentality: the "believer" as servant of the deity in the Greek world', in H. S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 152–91 at 174 with n. 100; but see the objection of Ehrhardt in his comments on *I. Milet* 1034.

100 The classic study is Laumonier, *Les cultes indigènes*.

101 Erythrai: *I. Erythrai* 201 a 64 and 72; 206; XII 6 2, no. 1197; E. Voutiras, 'Un culte domestique des corybantes', *Kernos* 9 (1996), pp. 243–56; N. Himmelmann, 'Die Priesterschaft der Kyrbantes in Erythrai (neues Fragment von I.K. 2, 206)', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 29 (1997), pp. 117–22. Pergamon: *I. Pergamon* 68 (second century BC; the relief shows two amphorai, signs of the Dioskouroi; on the

present, this type of historicizing explanation has lost favour among scholars, and it was never applied to Priene. What matters is the existence of these tensions and ambiguities. The inscriptions demonstrate that on the ground more complex religious realities prevailed, and the Greeks could live with such inconsistencies as, in other contexts, Henk Versnel has pointed out.<sup>102</sup>

## FESTIVALS AND PRIVATE INTERACTION WITH THE GODS

Although there were many means of interaction between humans and their gods, informal as well as formal ones, the privileged occasion for interaction was the festival with its prayers and sacrifices. Where no stone calendar is preserved, as is the case for most places outside Athens, the festival record is very spotty and based on two equally problematical sets of evidence: month names and direct attestations of specific festivals. In most of the local calendars of Greece, month names were based on festival names (even if the Greeks did not always think so).<sup>103</sup> But since some month names and festivals go back to the Mycenaean age, month names do not always reflect the importance of a festival in historical times: some festivals were introduced later but became highly popular, eclipsing earlier ones.<sup>104</sup> The main festival in the Athenian month Hekatombaion is not the shadowy Hekatombaia, but the Panathenaia; nor is Boedromion characterized by the equally insignificant Boedromia, but by the Eleusinian Mysteria; a festival Maimakteria that could have given its name to the month Maimakterion (or, in Phokaia, Maimakter) is unattested, although we have a Zeus Maimaktes, god of storms.<sup>105</sup> Month names are highly unreliable guides to festivals and gods. Outside the sacrificial calendars, the festivals that are most visible in the epigraphical record are those that have a political

uncertain distinction between the two groups Paus. 3.24.5). Miletos: *I. Milet* 1359. Halicarnassos: *BCH* 4 (1880), 399 no. 8 (priestess). Bargylia: *I. Iasos* 616. 22 (Kouretes and Korybantes). Rhodes: *IG XII* 1.8 and *Parola del Passato* 4 (1949) 73 (city of Rhodes); *Tit Camir* 90 i 34 (priesthood of Kyrbantes). Cos: *I. Cos* ED 377 (priesthood). Strabo 10.1.21 p. 473 claims the birth also for the Troad, after Demetrios of Skepsis.

102 H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1990–3).

103 See the decree from Ephesos, *LSAM* 31 = *I. Ephesus* 24B (c. 160 BC), which claims as the best proof for the widespread cult of Artemis the omnipresence of the month names Artemision and Artemisios.

104 The history of Greek festivals remains mainly unwritten; Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, is still the only systematic treatment of all festivals outside Attica, and the task of updating its epigraphical evidence would be daunting.

105 Harpocrat. s.v.; Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, p. 407.

function or aspect; but local epigraphical habit defined what we can learn.

Inscriptions from Priene mention the Dionysia, where honours were announced; the city Panathenaia, with a procession led by the eponymous magistrate and the sacrifice of a white cow, vaguely following the model of the Athenian Panathenaia, to which Priene also sent a delegation; and the ‘customary sacrifice of Zeus Keraunios’ on 12 Artemision:<sup>106</sup> none of these tells us anything about the divinity except the name, although a festival of the Zeus of the Lightning is intriguing.<sup>107</sup> A decree also rules on the introduction of a festival Soteria, named not after any saviour god but after the rescue from tyranny; the sacrifice and prayers address all the gods who helped their city.<sup>108</sup> In addition, several Hellenistic honorary decrees from Priene list the benefactions of a citizen who, when taking up the eponymous office of stephanephoros, lavishly celebrated several city festivals. No festivals are attested in Gonnoi, and honorary decrees comparable to the ones from Priene are absent from the epigraphical record in Gonnoi; here lavish elite spending was either frowned upon or found other outlets.

Wealthy stephanephoroi in Hellenistic Priene invited everybody to a festival at the start of their tenure, thus creating an atmosphere of all-inclusive city life and procuring as many grateful witnesses as possible to their generosity. The honorary decrees that recorded their largesse typically do not mention the divine recipients of the sacrifices: the writers of the decree wanted to highlight the generosity of the honoree, not his piety. The same inscriptions also record monthly sacrifices by the stephanephoroi to Zeus Olympios, the god whose wreath they were wearing, as well as to Hera, Athena Polias and the god Pan the Helper, Ἀρωγός;<sup>109</sup> I would like to assume that this group of gods also received the sacrifice at the beginning of the tenure, but no inscription confirms this. This cluster of gods puts a ritual emphasis not on the city but on

106 Panathenaia in Priene: *I.Priene* 108.281, the praise of a stephanephoros because of his procession at the local Panathenaia: προεπι[όμπευσεν δὲ καὶ ἐν τῇ τῶν Παναθηναίων ἐορτῇ βοῖ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ἄξια. Panathenaia in Athens: *I.Priene* 45, the Priene copy of an Athenian honorary decree for the theoroi. Zeus Keraunios: *I.Priene* 113.80–82 (sacrifice on 12 Artemision).

107 The god is attested all over Greece, but especially in the north and the (south) east.

108 *I.Priene* 11 (297 BC), instituted (16–18) to preserve the memory of the fight for autonomy and freedom, and to demonstrate piety towards the saving gods (τῇν] πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς τοὺς σώσαντ[ας ἡμᾶς εὐσέβειαν]).

109 *I.Priene* 108 (ll. 253–9 at the beginning of tenure, ll. 259–64 (at every first day of the month to Zeus Olympios, Hera, Athena Polias and Pan Arogos); no. 109 (monthly sacrifices to Zeus Olympios, Hera and Athena Polias); no. 113 (monthly sacrifices to Zeus Olympios and Hera); no. 46 (monthly sacrifices to Zeus Olympios, Hera, Athena Polias and Pan)).

its leading official. The principal divine recipient is not Zeus Polieus but Zeus Olympios; Athena Polias, the main protectress of the city, is only secondary. The invocation of Zeus Olympios stresses Zeus' role as divine king, not as city protector, model for his function as the protector of the king whose office the democratic *stephanephoros* was thought to have replaced. Hera's presence fits: she is the divine queen, as the wife of the *stephanephoros* is the First Lady; in other places, the wife of a leading official was very much involved in the benefactions of the festival as well.<sup>110</sup> This should warn us not to understand Hera somewhat simplistically as the goddess of female and private life only, on an Athenian model, or to project our oppositions of public and private upon ancient societies; if anything, the combination of Zeus, Hera and Athena recalls the Capitoline triad in Rome with its eminent political role. Pan the Helper sits oddly in this group; he must have been added in Priene after an intervention through panic and surprise, as his Athenian cult was introduced after his intervention in the First Persian War; but a story that would explain his role in Priene is not attested.<sup>111</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

As the study of the two cities has shown, inscriptions rarely talk directly and extensively about the gods: hymns would do so and so would miracle stories (*aretalogies*), which are both rare, and so would the even rarer local historiography preserved in stone. It is most often dedications that attest to how an individual perceived a local divinity; but dedications are mostly short and confined to the most necessary information: who dedicated to whom, and sometimes why. All other inscriptions provide short and indirect glimpses only – through honorary decrees that mention sanctuaries or special efforts by an honoree for a cult, a festival or a sanctuary; through decrees on priesthoods that spell out the conditions for the office that are relevant for the sale; through sacred laws that regulate behaviour in a sanctuary. Not all of these types of inscriptions are ubiquitous in Greece, and religious benefaction takes local forms as well – in Gonnoi, officials do not lavish money on festivals, and priesthoods are not for sale.

In either city, then, it is local custom and the local epigraphical habit that define the window upon both public and private worship that constructs local forms of divinities. It is a tantalizing window:

110 Most prominently in the activities of Epameinondas in Akraiphia, *IG VII* 2712.

111 On Pan the best treatment is still P. Borgeaud, *Recherches sur le Dieu Pan* (Rome: Swiss Institute, 1979).

one would like to believe that Gonnoi too had agoranomoi and gymnasiarchs who performed the cult of Hermes, or that in Priene women too prayed to (Artemis) Eileithyia for help in childbirth, or hunters to Apollo before a crucial shot, but in the absence of a habit of making the respective dedications, this remains an unverifiable assumption and, worse, runs the danger of circularity: the assumption is based on a general hypothesis about Panhellenic uniformity of cult and belief. Inscriptions can help, not to falsify such an assumption but at least to modify it, by highlighting the local and regional characteristics that do not easily fit into the Panhellenist hypothesis.



## METAMORPHOSES OF GODS INTO ANIMALS AND HUMANS

*Richard Buxton*

Is the hoary old cliché ‘good to think with’ still good to think with? In my view, yes. One concept that certainly is (and was) good to think with is metamorphosis. In antiquity it was good to think with about just two things, but because those two things are nothing less than the limits of humanity and the nature of the gods, that is, I think, quite enough to be going on with.<sup>1</sup>

Stories of metamorphosis which explore the limits of humanity – stories which I am *not* going to discuss in this chapter – narrate transformations of human beings as an alternative to death: prolongations of existence as laurel, wolf, spider, constellation. There is plenty of scope for more investigation here, for instance in relation to why certain genres play down the notion of human exit via metamorphosis, whereas others gleefully accept it; not to mention the radical differences even within a single genre – I have in mind the resolutely death-centred *Iliad* at one end of the epic spectrum, the much more transformation-friendly *Odyssey* a little further along, and, at the far end, the radically open, feverishly metamorphic world of Nonnos. There is also room for more work on the interaction between the metamorphic tradition, considered globally, and other types of belief in the perpetuability of humanity through changed, sometimes non-human forms, beliefs based on the assumed persistence of the soul after death. All that, however, is for consideration at another time.<sup>2</sup>

In the present chapter I shall discuss the other kind of metamorphosis, that of the gods. What, in particular, can the gods’ self-transformations tell us about the nature of divine power, about the

1 The present chapter is a cursory presentation of some of the arguments set out in much greater detail in my book *Forms of Astonishment: Greek Myths of Metamorphosis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). I am grateful to the publishers of that book for allowing me to develop those arguments briefly here.

2 All these issues are considered in the book referred to in n. 1.

essential form of divinities, and about our role as interpreters of these phenomena? In order to address these questions I shall examine five examples of narratives which relate in some way to divine metamorphosis, narratives involving five different divinities. From each example I shall draw one or two conclusions. Finally I shall offer some more general remarks, attempting to relate the evidence which I have presented to the time-honoured problem of how far Greek religion was essentially anthropomorphic.

# 1

I begin with Athena in *Odyssey* Book 1. Having likened herself to Mentès, the goddess urges Telemachos no longer to cling to childhood. After fulfilling this mission, the goddess departs from Ithaca (319–23):

Ἥ μὲν ἄρ' ὥς εἰποῦσ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη,  
 ὄρνις δ' ὥς ἀνοπαῖα διέπτατο . . .  
 ὁ δὲ φρεσὶν ἦσι νοήσας  
 θάμβησεν κατὰ θυμόν· ὅτσατο γὰρ θεὸν εἶναι.

So spoke the goddess grey-eyed Athena, and she went away, *ornis d' hōs anopaia dieptato* . . . and he noticed in his mind, and he was astonished (*thambēsen*) in his heart, for he thought it was a divinity.

Controversy over the meaning of ὄρνις δ' ὥς ἀνοπαῖα διέπτατο (*ornis d' hōs anopaia dieptato*) is at least as old as the ancient scholia. The disagreement even extends to accentuation and word division. The Alexandrian scholar Aristarchos thought the reading should be ἀνόπαια (*anopaia*), taken to be the name of a kind of bird; his rival Krates took ἀν' ὀπαῖα (*an' opaia*) to mean 'through the smoke-vent in the roof'. What I want to draw attention to here, though, is not these differences over translation, but rather a comment by Dr Stephanie West in the Oxford *Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, about the smoke-vent option:

On this interpretation it is difficult to avoid the inference that Athena is supposed to be transformed into a bird, not merely, as some have thought, compared to one. Though διέπτατο [*dieptato*] might be used of swift movement other than literal flying . . . , it is absurd to imagine Mentès suddenly levitating towards the roof and squeezing out through a chink in the tiles; we are surely

meant to suppose that he suddenly vanished and Telemachus saw instead a bird flying overhead.<sup>3</sup>

The commentator is quite prepared to entertain the possibility that Athena might be represented as undergoing metamorphosis, but draws the line at taking a further step in the direction of, as she sees it, absurdity. That Athena should vanish is acceptable, that she should levitate is not. The scene is interpreted – made sense of – via the assumption of a blank space between Athena-as-Mentes and Athena-as-bird.

I draw two conclusions from this passage and from the commentary on it. First, the Homeric lines highlight the *thambos*, astonishment, which Telemachos experiences when Athena leaves: *thambos* often (but, as we shall see, not always) signals that the observers within a narrative are astounded at the irruption of the sacred into the everyday. Secondly, Dr West's commentary on these lines highlights the crucial role of the interpreter in identifying what is strange and what is appropriate, in the attempt to make sense of what is being narrated, sometimes to the detriment of a persuasive reading of a passage – as, I would argue, in the case of this passage, in which what has occurred *may not actually be completely understandable or visualizable*.

## 2

I turn now to my second divinity.

According to P. M. C. Forbes Irving, author of the best-known contemporary study of Greek metamorphosis myths, certain mythological figures are especially prone to change their form: they are 'shape-shifters', and their defining characteristic is that 'they undergo a whole series of transformations rather than a single one'.<sup>4</sup> The figures included by Forbes Irving in this category are Proteus, Nereus, Metis, Nemesis, Thetis, Periklymenos, Dionysos and Mestra. Unfortunately there are several flaws in Forbes Irving's analysis, not the least of which is to describe these figures collectively as 'heroes', in spite of the fact that several of them are unequivocally divinities. Moreover, it is highly questionable whether one can distinguish, as Forbes Irving seeks to do, the self-transformations of those on this list from the self-transformations of 'the gods' on the ground that, unlike

3 S. West in A. Heubeck et al., *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), n. on 1.320.

4 P. M. C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 171.

those of the gods, *their* self-transformations ‘have strong suggestions of magic’.<sup>5</sup> Leaving well alone the suggestion that magic can be used as a discriminating characteristic here, I want instead to recall a passage at the end of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. The god for whom the *Hymn* is composed mitigates his confrontation with a shipload of unsuspecting Cretan businessmen by ‘resembling a dolphin in body’ (*demas delphini eoikōs*, 400). The crew’s reaction to this ‘great marvel’ (*mega thauma*, 415) is one of silent terror, as the god/dolphin shakes the boat around. Later he/it leaps off the boat ‘in the form of a star’ (*asteri eidomenos*, 441). Is this ‘just a simile’, as with the famous image in *Iliad* 6.401 where the toddler Astyanax is likened to ‘a lovely star’? But *sparks* fly off the star/dolphin-like-a-star/god-like-a-dolphin-like-a-star, who/which then passes into a shrine, before shifting shape once again (449–50) to that of a fine, strong youth. Where is this shrine? At Delphi. And who is this divinity? Not Dionysos (for all *his* propensity to turn into dangerous things on a boat), but Apollo, my second divinity. The unnerving encounter between the Cretans and the shape-shifting sacred is ultimately smoothed when the god incorporates the businessmen into his worship as celebrants of Apollo Delphinios. But they have learned a timely lesson: that the elusive capacity for serial metamorphosis may belong even to the most paradigmatically anthropomorphic of gods. My conclusion from this example is that I see no need to bracket off ‘shape-shifters’ into a special category. Metamorphosis, even serial metamorphosis, is potentially a characteristic of *all* the gods, including all the Olympians.

### 3

Thetis is my third divinity. Visual illustrations of her capacity to self-transform, in a series of virtuoso attempts to elude the clutches of her suitor Peleus, are among the most striking mythological images in Greek art.<sup>6</sup> But the narrative tradition of Greek mythology is irredeemably pluralistic and sensitive to context. Not everywhere do we find the goddess to be a self-transformer; and the exceptions are revealing.

When Thetis answers Achilles’ call in *Iliad* book 1, there are no barriers to their mutual recognition. The goddess may emerge from the water ‘like mist’ (*ēut’ omichlē*, 359), but when she sits beside her son and strokes him, he recognizes her instantly. Not only does she not transform herself into a panther or a snake; she does not even change

5 Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*, p. 171.

6 See *LIMC* VII, ‘Peleus’; VIII, ‘Thetis’.

into a mitigating *human* shape. In book 18, she again comes out of the sea to comfort Achilles, this time without the mediation even of a comparison, let alone that of a metamorphosis; once more Achilles' recognition is instantaneous: 'My mother' (*mēter emē*, 79). In book 24, when Thetis prompts Achilles to accept the ransom for Hektor, things are no different: there is no suggestion that Achilles' recognition of his mother is anything other than immediate (120ff). Now one of the most crucial expressions in the study of Greek mythology is 'And yet . . .'. Usually in Greek mythological narratives, divinities who confront mortals do so through the mediating gambit of metamorphosis, in order to mitigate the effect of the electric energy which they embody – a mediation which typically results in their being recognized *only when they leave*. And yet not so here: so special is the Iliadic Achilles that neither does Thetis transform herself, nor does Achilles have difficulty in identifying her the moment she arrives, nor is there the slightest sense of an imbalance in energy between the two. Usually in Greek mythological narratives, the appearance of a divinity in *un*-metamorphosed form arouses *thambos* among mortals who witness the event. And yet not so here. The unique intimacy of the Iliadic Thetis–Achilles relationship is expressed through Achilles' *lack* of astonishment – unlike the reaction of Achilles when Athena intervenes in the quarrel between himself and Agamemnon in book 1: *thambēsen d' Achilleus* (θάμβησεν δ' Ἀχιλλεύς, 199). Achilles' relationship with his mother is far closer than that between him and any other divinity, even Athena. My conclusion regarding the Homeric representation of Thetis is, then, that we must always remember the importance of: 'And yet . . .'.

#### 4

My fourth divinity is Dionysos. Euripides' *Bacchae* is dominated by changes of form; and many of these concern Dionysos himself. At the start of his prologue Dionysos establishes that he has 'taken the *morphēn* of a mortal in exchange for that of a god' (4); he re-emphasizes this at the end of his speech: 'I have taken and keep the *eidos* of a mortal, and I have altered my *morphēn* to that of a man' (53–4). As the action unfolds, changes in the god's form – either real or imagined – multiply. For Teiresias, Dionysos' divine power is a liquid, who (or which) can be poured out as a libation in the form of wine (284). To Pentheus, by contrast, what seems most striking about the Stranger is his femininity (353; cf. 453ff.). With the entry of the Servant (434), yet another perspective on the Stranger develops: he is a wild beast (436).

In the first confrontation between Pentheus and Dionysos, the unrecognized god tells the uncomprehending mortal the precise truth (477–8):

*Pen.* You say you saw the god clearly. What appearance did he have?

*Dion.* Whatever appearance he chose. It was not I who decided that.

Each new Dionysiac miracle confirms the power of the new divinity to effect metamorphosis. After the shattering monosyllabic cry ‘Ah!’ by which Dionysos overturns Pentheus’ *mind*, for the god to change Pentheus’ *appearance* is literally a formality, as the Theban ruler agrees to dress as a woman (827–43). Pentheus resembles ‘in *morphēn*’ one of the daughters of Kadmos (917; cf. 925–7). His wits, too, are altered, incapable as he is of distinguishing the Stranger’s human shape from that of a bull (920–2).

The concept of metamorphosis guides us to the heart of the play’s meaning, in relation to the distinction between humanity and divinity. Dionysos’ form is mobile, fluid, unbounded: as the chorus expresses it in the coda: ‘Many are the forms of divinity’ (*pollai morphai tōn daimoniōn*, 1388). Pentheus, by contrast, seeks not to dissolve order, but to impose it; when he is induced to *relax* a boundary – that between male and female – the result is by turns ridiculous and horrific. For the mortal Pentheus, to become female (*gunaikomorphon*, 855) is to be diminished, to be less than a man. But when *Dionysos* assumes new forms – including that of a feminized mortal man (*thēlumorphon*, 353) – this constitutes not a diminution of his divinity, but an extra dimension to it: he is feminine *as well as* masculine. (Precisely the same is true of Zeus, whose main role in this play is to be not just Dionysos’ father, but also his mother – sewing him into his thigh before the second birth. If you are Zeus, to be a mother is not to be any less of a father.)<sup>7</sup> My conclusion regarding Dionysos is that metamorphosis does not diminish divine power, but enhances it.

## 5

My fifth and final god is Zeus. From the shower of gold, to the swan, to the rather un-exotic form of Amphytrion, Zeus typically

<sup>7</sup> See R. Buxton, ‘Feminized males in *Bacchae*: the importance of discrimination’, in S. Goldhill and E. Hall (eds), *Sophocles and the Greek Tragic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 232–50.

uses metamorphosis to further his erotic ambitions. Metamorphosis for erotic pursuit is of course a prime motivation for most of the gods (and occasionally goddesses) to self-transform. When discussing erotic metamorphoses practised by male deities, Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux, in her thought-provoking recent book *L'homme-cerf et la femme-araignée*, intriguingly interprets the phenomenon in psycho-sexual terms: 'The sexual act – envisaged of course from the male point of view – does not consist only of the penetration of the body of the other person, but also of an escape from one's own limits and, in the process of mutual linkage, an experiencing of the diversity of living things, even that of the elements.'<sup>8</sup> In other words, erotic metamorphosis is an image for the longing by the male to escape, at the moment of coition, from the confines of his own form. I would like to quote a passage which beautifully illustrates this point, in a way which is more than simply speculative: as I shall show, the words of a text back it up.

The story of Semele illustrates the truth that, when Zeus does *not* self-transform in order to unite sexually with a mortal, disaster ensues. In one particular version of the story, this truth is driven home the more effectively because the catastrophe is preceded by an episode in which Zeus *does* self-transform, serially, and in such a manner as to be climactically successful without incinerating his partner. The teller of this version is Nonnos, in book 7 of his fifth-century AD epic poem *Dionysiaca*.

Struck by Eros' arrow, Zeus lusts after Semele, whom he spies bathing in the river Asopos. So begins a sequence of metamorphoses. First Zeus becomes an eagle (7.210ff), through whose sharp eyes he inspects his intended lover. Then, swift as thought, he comes to her bed. For the love-making which will lead to the conception of Dionysos, Zeus mitigates his full divinity in a riot of animal and vegetable metamorphoses which anticipate several features of the natural realm over which the soon-to-be-born divinity will preside (319–35):

At one moment he leaned over the bed, with a horned head on human limbs, lowing with the voice of a bull, the very imitation of bullhorned Dionysos. Again, he put on the form of a shaggy lion; at another time he was a panther, like one who sires a bold son, driver of panthers and charioteer of lions. Again, as a young bridegroom he bound his hair with coiling snakes and vine-leaves intertwined, and twisted purple ivy about his locks, the plaited

8 F. Frontisi-Ducroux, *L'homme-cerf et la femme-araignée* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), p. 177.

ornament of Bacchos. A writhing serpent crawled over the trembling bride and licked her rosy neck with gentle lips, then slipping into her bosom girdled the circuit of her firm breasts, hissing a wedding tune, and sprinkled her with sweet honey of the swarming bees instead of the viper's deadly poison. Zeus' love-making was prolonged and, as if the winepress were near, he shouted 'Euhoi!' as he sired his son who would love that cry.<sup>9</sup>

As he ejaculates, Zeus shouts out the Bacchic cry of 'Euhoi' – a striking Nonnian *coup* by which the father becomes the son whom he is engendering. Zeus not only steps outside himself, as Frontisi-Ducroux put it: at the moment of coition, he actually steps into the next generation.

My conclusions from this section are: (1) here is another example of serial metamorphosis on the part of an Olympian: this is not just a characteristic of 'the shape-shifters'. (2) Zeus is not diminished by his transformations: they are an added dimension of his power. (3) Extraordinarily – but there are few limits to the pluralism of Greek mythology – Zeus here turns neither into non-anthropomorphic nor into 'mitigating' human form, but into the identity of another god. With typical Nonnian virtuosity, it is the god who is in the very act of being conceived.

## 6

In the final part of this chapter I bring our stories of divine metamorphosis to bear upon the general question of anthropomorphism within Greek religion.<sup>10</sup>

Asking 'how far are the beliefs of this or that religion fundamentally anthropomorphic?' can offer a useful way into many systems of religious belief. For example, those of ancient Mesopotamia: while the Mesopotamian gods are powerful, radiant, exalted, and awesome in their perception and knowledge, their *form* is fundamentally human. Or the beliefs of Hindu religion and mythology, where hybrid animal-human forms of divinity are all-pervasive, and which teem with deities (not least Vishnu) who self-transform into an appearance either entirely or partially zoomorphic. Or the particularly complex case of ancient Egypt. While deities appear in a variety of non-human forms, none of these forms is identical or coterminous with the deity; rather

9 I have adapted the translation by W. H. D. Rouse, *Nonnos: Dionysiaca* (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940–2).

10 For this question see also Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1.



they are signs or icons which represent merely one aspect of the deity.<sup>11</sup> For all the striking differences between Greek and Egyptian religion, the following point constitutes a similarity: when an Egyptian divinity adopts a particular, non-anthropomorphic guise, such a form does not exhaust all the possibilities of the god's being.

Where should we place Greece against such a background? Clearly Greek belief did not univocally attribute anthropomorphic form to its divinities: it is enough to cite the dissenting voice of Xenophanes, in whose view, whereas mortals commonly believe that 'the gods are born, and that they have clothes and speech and bodies like their own', the true situation is quite different: in reality there is 'one god, greatest among gods and men, in no way similar to mortals either in body or in thought'.<sup>12</sup> Nor is it hard to point to numerous examples of non-anthropomorphic appearance on the part of divinities from within the mainstream of Greek mythico-religious thought. Not only was the Hesiodic Typhoeus a hybrid ('out of his shoulders came a hundred fearsome snake-heads'), but he also exhibited versatility approximating to the capacity for serial metamorphosis: sometimes his voices utter 'as if for the gods' understanding', but sometimes they sound like bulls, or lions, or hounds; or they hiss.<sup>13</sup> The metaphorical fringes of Olympus are populated by hybrid divinities: centaurs, satyrs, Pan, dog-headed Lyssa, the snaky Erinyes. Nor of course is it excluded that the Olympians themselves may be imagined non-anthropomorphically. According to Pausanias (8.42.4), the Black Demeter of Arcadian Phigalia 'resembled a woman except for the head; she had the head and mane of a horse, with representations of serpents and other beasts growing out of her head; she wore a tunic down to her feet; on one hand she had a dolphin and on the other a dove'. And so forth.

Yet in spite of all this, anthropomorphism remains unquestionably predominant. The question for us is: do the varieties of divine metamorphosis constitute an exception to this predominance of anthropomorphism? My answer is that they do not. In so far as Greek gods have an essence – a 'home base' – this must in most cases be taken to be anthropomorphic, even if it is larger, more fragrant and more radiant than the human norm. Many metamorphosis narratives talk of the gods *resuming* their shape – a shape which is by implication anthropomorphic. There is a classic case in Moschos' poem *Europa*:

11 See for example F. Dunand and C. Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt 3000 BCE to 395 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), esp. pp. 13–41.

12 Frr. 167 and 170 in G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield (eds), *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983<sup>2</sup>).

13 Hes. *Th.* 824–5; 830–5.

before mating with the maiden whom he had abducted after assuming the form of a bull, Zeus 'again took back his own shape' (*palin spheterēn anelazeto morphēn*, 163). Again, in the case of serial shape-shifting, each ending of the sequence typically involves the resumption of anthropomorphic form.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, as we have seen, many cases of divine metamorphosis are precisely *into the form of human beings*.

But lest by banging the drum of anthropomorphism I shall seem to over-domesticate and so neutralize the strangeness of Greek religious experience, let me recall a point I made earlier. Frequently, narratives of divine metamorphosis show us that the gods were imagined as having the potential to shock and alarm mortals by suddenly bursting out of the confines of the expected, to create *thambos*. John Gould rightly saw the Greek concept of divinity as a combination of that which is human and that which is incommensurable-with-the-human.<sup>15</sup> The gods are bound to humans by ties of reciprocity, yet at any moment they are liable to step out of the role of partner and into that of the terrifyingly strange and alien power. Greeks constructed all manner of frameworks by which to attempt to control their dealings with the sacred. Ritual is the most obvious of these, with its panoply of procession, libation, sacrifice, prayer, votive offering, each of them implying respect for the gods, combined with a constantly renewed affirmation of the ties which bind mortals to gods in a network of mutual obligation. But the message of mythology is very often that, in spite of all precautions, the power of divinity may break out, to the benefit or for the destruction of mortals. Stories of divine metamorphosis express this sense of danger and promise with literally astonishing force. Such stories obliged myth-tellers and their hearers to confront a world whose sacred powers were alarming and unstable – an effective enough means of coping with life's fundamental instability.

And yet . . . many – and perhaps the most moving – examples of divine metamorphosis do *not* involve the gods taking on an alien and unsettling shape. I began with the *Odyssey*; where else to end but with the *Iliad*? In book 24 Hermes, for his meeting with Priam, chooses to mitigate the awesomeness of divinity by appearing as 'a young man, a noble, with his beard just growing, the time of the bloom of young manhood' (347–8) – a younger version of the slaughtered Hektor so achingly present in Priam's thoughts. Eventually, his mission as guide accomplished, Hermes takes his leave. But although he identifies himself as an immortal god, there is no *thambos*, no miraculous bird-

14 Cf. Proteus in *Od.* 4.421.

15 J. Gould, *Myth, Ritual, Memory, and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 203–34.

transformation, no disappearance, certainly no levitation, to take the attention. He just goes (468–9):

So saying, Hermes left for high Olympos;  
but Priam jumped down from the horses to the ground . . .

At the climax of this greatest of all poems, nothing must be allowed to detract from the impending encounter between Achilles and Priam, alone in their all-too-finite humanity.

## SACRIFICING TO THE GODS: ANCIENT EVIDENCE AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

*Stella Georgoudi*

It is a commonplace to say that sacrifice constitutes the central act of the worship of Greek gods and heroes in the Greek cities. One of the likely reasons for this central position is the fact that many other actions, such as processions, dances, prayers, athletic contests and, more generally, festivals and the deposition of votive offerings, were associated with sacrifices or performed in contexts which in some way or other included aspects of sacrificial practice. As Michael Jameson said, in a very concise manner: 'Ritual activity was crucial for any Greek social entity. Although we emphasize social and political functions, for its members it might almost be said that the *raison d'être* of the group was the offering of sacrifice to a particular supernatural figure or group of figures.'<sup>1</sup> It is then a little surprising that some studies on the religion of the Greek polis do not put the sacrificial question at the centre of their considerations.<sup>2</sup>

Another commonplace is to suggest that the sacrificial ritual functions as a mediation between the worshippers and the divine or heroic powers. These are very general statements with which everybody can agree. The difficulties arise when we want to go further and try to explore the significance of this act. Now, the first difficulty comes from the fact that, for many anthropologists, ethnologists, sociologists or specialists in ancient civilizations, the sacrificial act can be explained by *one* general theory, capable of interpreting all civilizations throughout time.

I am grateful to Jan Bremmer and Andrew Erskine for their precious remarks.

- 1 M. H. Jameson, 'The spectacular and obscure in Athenian religion', in S. Goldhill and R. Osborne (eds), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 321–40 at 336.
- 2 Cf., for example, the otherwise excellent study of C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is polis religion?', in O. Murray and S. Price (eds), *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 295–322, reprinted in R. Buxton (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 13–37.

The historiography of this theoretical position cannot be examined here. It is sufficient to recall the names of some great scholars, such as Edward Burnett Tylor, Robertson Smith, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, or E. O. James. Although there are differences due to their particular methodological approaches, these scholars are in agreement that a single explanation can account for sacrificial ritual in different cultures at different times. Or, more precisely, they often emphasize *one* element of the sacrificial procedure, an element on which they construct their general theory. Hence, sacrifice has been regarded, for example, as 'gift offering' (Tylor), as a 'meal of communication' with the gods, by the eating of the *totem* (Smith), as an act of 'substitution' (Evans-Pritchard), as a means of communication between the human and the divine, associated with two antithetical movements: 'sacralization' and 'desacralization' (Hubert and Mauss, James). On the other hand, James Frazer, a prominent member of the so-called 'Cambridge School', did not really develop a general theory of sacrifice; nevertheless, the association he made between ritual killing and the idea of 'fertility' was almost obsessive.

However, this way of thinking is not only characteristic of anthropologists, orientalist and sociologists: many specialists in Greek religion have considered Greek sacrifice as being a homogeneous entity. They have more or less tried to find *one* single explanation for various sacrificial actions. The classic book by Walter Burkert, *Homo necans*, remains a remarkable example of this tendency. Inspired by Karl Meuli's famous study, 'Griechische Opferbräuche', and the theory which Meuli called the *Unschuldskomödie* (the 'comedy of innocence'), Burkert emphasized the notions of 'guilt' and of 'anxiety', regarding them as the fundamental concepts that one must use in order to comprehend all kinds of sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

More recently, in his essay *Il sacrificio*, Cristiano Grottanelli opts for a 'minimal definition' of sacrifice, which interprets this rite in all cultures.<sup>4</sup> Thus the sacrifice would consist in four fundamental actions: (1) the acquisition and preparation of the victim; (2) the ritual killing; (3) the renunciation of part of the victim's body, removed from the human sphere; and (4) the consumption of meat. But I am not sure that this extreme generalization helps us to understand better the Greek *thusia*. On the contrary, if we try to adapt the Greek evidence to this 'minimal definition', we rather run the risk of distorting these same sources.

3 W. Burkert, *Homo necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, tr. P. Bing (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983; German orig. 1972).

4 C. Grottanelli, *Il sacrificio* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1999).

Nor, in 1979 when we published our book, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, a collaborative project edited by Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant,<sup>5</sup> did we escape the danger of generalization ourselves. I do not want to underestimate the importance of this work, which placed sacrifice at the centre of the Greek city, and applied methods from structural anthropology, comparative religion and philology in order to explain not only the complicated relations between gods and humans but also various aspects of Greek culture, such as marriage, women's position in society, ways of viewing the Barbarians, the status of domesticated and savage animals etc. Nor do I intend to minimize the impact of this book, its innovative propositions, or the discussions that followed its publication. Since that time, however, important progress in the fields of archaeology, epigraphy and iconography has changed our perception of Greek sacrifice.

In the first place, we had interpreted Greek sacrifice on the basis of the Prometheus myth, as it is told by Hesiod (*Theog.* 533–64; cf. *Op.* 42–58). Considering this myth as the text *par excellence* which founded Greek sacrificial practice in general, we developed a theory of Greek sacrifice focused on the motif of non-violence. We claimed that the sacrificial practice of the Greeks tried in various manners to avoid any sudden moves or abrupt gestures, in order to play down the violence in the sacrificial ceremony, 'as if from the very outset it were necessary to disclaim any guilt of murder' (p. 9). For this reason, we argued, the animal selected as victim is led 'without ties', 'without ropes', 'without any constraint' in a procession to the altar, in a completely peaceful manner, 'at the same pace as the future diners'.

In the second place, we had based our interpretation almost exclusively on *one* type of sacrifice, the one that is followed by a *sacrificial feast*. From our point of view, Greek sacrifice was essentially an act of *meat-eating*, an act of roasting or cooking meat for the sake of the sacrificers, while the gods receive only the bones, more precisely the thigh-bones, burnt with fat on the altar. Consequently, we had put aside many other sacrificial forms, as, for example, the immolation of animals before battle, the killing of victims during divinatory or purificatory sacrifices, or even the bloodless sacrifices which form an integral part of Greek *thusia*.

On the other hand, starting from the very peculiar ritual of ox-slaying during the Attic festival named Dipolieia (or Bouphonia) we regarded this particular kind of sacrifice as the proof of the whole

5 M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds), *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979; tr. *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

theory of ‘bad conscience’ and ‘guilt’ in killing sacrificial animals among ancient Greeks. In our book, we viewed this very strange and absolutely singular ritual as a dramatization of the questions inherent in all animal sacrifice, as being the extreme form of the ‘comedy of innocence’ that Greeks played out whenever they sacrificed an animal. The Athenians themselves, in the classical period, looked upon this festival as something extremely old-fashioned, *archaia*, says Aristophanes in the *Clouds* (984–5), joking about these two names (*Dipoliôdê . . . kai Bouphoniôn*).<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, if this sacrificial ritual concerns the killing of plough-oxen, it tells us nothing about the morality of sacrificing cattle, sheep, goats or pigs, all of which make up the most usual sacrificial victims in Greece. Indeed, different narratives concerning the origin of sacrifice of these animals have nothing to do with ‘guilt’ or ‘human culpability’ or the so-called ‘comedy of innocence’ (see below, n. 10). The example of the Bouphonia is a good one to show the dangers of generalization: from a *particular* sacrificial ritual that takes place in a *particular* context and time, in a *particular* cult, we should not generalize and construct a whole theory about animal killing in Greek sacrifice.<sup>7</sup> In addition, we may say that, owing to the variety of sacrificial forms in the Greek cities, there is almost no general statement about Greek sacrifice that cannot be modified and even refuted by a contrary example.

Beyond the pitfall of generalization, we must focus once more on another methodological error in the study of Greek sacrifice. Indeed, many works on this subject often use Greek literature as evidence, sometimes almost exclusively, without taking into consideration epigraphical, archaeological or iconographical evidence. For example, in our book *The Cuisine of Sacrifice*, the contribution from inscriptions is almost absent. Even the interesting analysis of iconographical material by Jean-Louis Durand (pp. 87–128) remains prisoner of the Greek sacrificial model that we had developed; that is, as I said before, the *Hesiodic model* we believed to be applicable to sacrifices in the Greek world as a whole.

This one-sided approach naturally leads to errors. For the above

6 On the festival of Dipolieia/Bouphonia, cf. R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 187–91; see also below, n. 9. With regard to four black-figure vase paintings, which are usually connected with this festival, F. van Straten, *Hiera kalá: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 52, rightly observes: ‘the vase paintings . . . are remarkably lacking in significant detail’.

7 On the ‘limited circulation’ of the ritual of Dipolieia, cf. J. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999<sup>2</sup>), pp. 41–2, and ‘Greek normative animal sacrifice’, in D. Ogden (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 132–44 at 142.

reasons, we decided to revisit *The Cuisine of Sacrifice* and to reconsider a certain number of our positions in a recent collective book with comparative studies on sacrifice in some Mediterranean cultures.<sup>8</sup> I do not intend to repeat this discussion and the arguments developed during the re-examination of these positions. I would just like to point out some assertions, some ideas, that, by dint of repetition in different studies on Greek sacrifice, have become almost self-evident formulae accepted by many scholars. I will merely use two examples, treating each briefly, because I have dealt with them more exhaustively elsewhere.

The first concerns the assertion, often made in our book *The Cuisine of Sacrifice*, that the ‘concealment of violence’ is a central element of Greek blood sacrifice. This statement is due to the common belief, expressed by many scholars, that the instruments of death, not only the knife (*machaira*) but also the axe (*pelekus*), were *intentionally* kept hidden until the last moment, in order, as we said, ‘to disclaim any guilt of murder’. Yet a reconsideration of the ancient evidence as well as the archaeological and iconographic material, including not only vases but also a number of votive reliefs, does not actually confirm such a statement.<sup>9</sup> In the same paper, I also discussed the idea, which is now almost a cliché in Greek studies, that the victims should walk towards the altar peacefully, freely, at the same pace as the future diners, without being restrained by ropes or any other kind of *desmoi*, or bonds. Once again, I think that, in our effort to fill out the theory of the ‘concealment of violence’, we have somehow forced the evidence, neglecting the question of the recalcitrant victims, as well as many scenes of sacrificial processions where the animals are led to the altar tied up with ropes fastened on their legs, horns, necks or tails.

The second example concerns the theory of the ‘consenting’ animal, to which the theme of the ‘willing’ victim is closely related. According to this idea, which is widely accepted by scholars, before killing the victim the sacrificers put the animal in contact with pure water and barley grain, in order to oblige it to shake its head. And this movement would be considered by the Greeks as a signal given by the animal, as a sign of *agreement* to its own death.

Once more, a careful examination of the ancient evidence does<sup>10</sup>

8 S. Georgoudi et al., (eds), *La cuisine et l'autel: Les sacrifices en questions dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).

9 See S. Georgoudi, ‘L’“occultation de la violence” dans le sacrifice grec: données anciennes, discours modernes’, in Georgoudi et al., *La cuisine et l'autel*, pp. 115–47 (pp. 134–38 on the Bouphonia).

10 See S. Georgoudi, ‘Le consentement de la victime sacrificielle: une question ouverte’, in V. Mehl and P. Brulé (eds), *Le sacrifice antique: Vestiges, procédures et*



by no means justify the great importance attached by many scholars to 'the whole fiction of the victim's assent to its own killing'.<sup>11</sup> As a matter of fact, I do not think that we have to do with a very 'essential' and 'meaningful' modality of the sacrificial ritual. The conviction that a 'great number of texts' refer to the 'assenting' animal is due to a confusion between the ordinary sacrificial victims (which can appear unwilling and recalcitrant) and another kind of victims, that is, the 'sacred' animals. In fact, certain of these *hiera zôia*, owned by a god or a goddess, can sometimes walk to the sacrificial altar of their own free will, without the intervention of humans, or obeying an order from their divine proprietor.<sup>12</sup>

The two examples very briefly discussed are mainly focused on theories about ritual killing involving human participants and sacrificial animals. They are, obviously, also related to Greek gods and heroes, the supernatural addressees of human gifts, the recipients of bloody and/or bloodless sacrifices. I would now like to raise another question concerning the gods and their involvement in the sacrificial ritual more directly.

This question concerns the *choice* of sacrificial animals and is an important question rarely taken into consideration by scholars: how and why do Greek cities or individuals choose to sacrifice certain animals to gods or to heroes and not others? What are the reasons, the factors that determine this choice? To what extent do they differ according to places and circumstances?<sup>13</sup> When scholars do sometimes touch on this question, they usually make general statements,<sup>14</sup> or they are more interested in constructing distinctions between 'extraordinary' animals (for example, dogs) and 'ordinary' victims, belonging to the 'norm-group' of bovines, goats, sheep and swine.<sup>15</sup> Some scholars

*stratégies* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), pp. 139–53 (pp. 140–7 on 'human culpability' and the origin of animal sacrifice).

11 I borrow this expression from van Straten, *Hiera kalá*, p. 102, who judiciously remarks that 'in the iconographical material . . . the formal sign of consent of the sacrificial victim clearly was not an aspect of the ritual that was thought particularly interesting or important'.

12 Cf. Georgoudi, 'Le consentement', pp. 149–53 with references.

13 Cf. some first reflections, S. Georgoudi, 'Quelles victimes pour les dieux? À propos des animaux "sacrifiables" dans le monde grec', in M.-T. Cam (ed.), *La médecine vétérinaire antique* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007), pp. 35–44.

14 Cf. E. Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 57: 'The choice of animal evidently depends on the taste and sensibilities of the recipient and the cultic context'.

15 Cf. F. Graf, 'What is new about Greek sacrifice?', in H. F. J. Horstmannshoff et al. (eds), *Kykeon: Studies in Honour of H. S. Versnel* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 113–25 at 118–19. This kind of binary classification is also applied by scholars to the sacrificial act as a whole. They propose, in fact, to make a distinction between

emphasize *one* particular explanation for the choice of sacrificial animals: the wealth of the sacrificer, for instance. Certainly, it is possible to delineate some general principles concerning the choice of animal from our evidence. For example:

1. Greeks mainly sacrifice cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.
2. Male animals are usually sacrificed to gods and heroes, female ones to goddesses and heroines (but it is well known that this practice includes noteworthy exceptions).
3. Victims intended for public festivals are normally submitted to examination (*dokimasia*), in order for them to be declared fit for sacrifice, unblemished, undamaged and entire (*holoklara*). They must not only be 'selected' (*hiereia krita*), but they must also be the 'most beautiful' (*kallista*).<sup>16</sup> But the usage of *dokimasia* is neither absolute nor exclusive. Especially in the case of animals offered by individuals, Greek cult practice allows them sometimes to sacrifice to different divinities 'any victim whatsoever' (*hiereion hotioun*), or 'what every man possesses' (*ho ti kektêtai*).<sup>17</sup>

The list of these general principles can certainly be extended, but it does not go far towards helping us identify the reasons why a particular sacrificial animal is chosen to honour a divinity, nor to grasp an eventual privileged relation between a victim and a deity.

Many scholars, relying almost exclusively on literary sources, or on some images, establish a kind of intimate association between certain victims and certain divinities. For example, Zeus and Poseidon would prefer bulls, Artemis and Apollo would take delight in stags and goats, Hermes would accept rams and he-goats,<sup>18</sup> Hera would like cows, the virgin Athena would require unbroken cattle,<sup>19</sup> the fertile

(footnote 15 *continued*)

two general categories: on one hand, we would have what are called 'normal', 'ordinary', 'regular' or 'standard' sacrifices, based on 'common practice'; and on the other, what scholars qualify as 'powerful actions', 'unusual', 'non-standard' or 'abnormal' sacrifices, 'highlight modifications' or 'deviations' from the sacrificial 'normality' etc. However, I think that this kind of approach to Greek sacrifices creates more problems than it resolves, and that it should be reconsidered in depth.

16 See P. Gauthier, 'La *dokimasia* des victimes: note sur une inscription d'Entella', *ASNP* 14 (1984), pp. 845–8; Georgoudi, 'Quelles victimes pour les dieux', pp. 36–9 (with references).

17 *LSS* no. 83, 8 (Astypalaia); Paus. 8.37.8.

18 Cf. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, tr. J. Raffan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985; German orig. 1977), pp. 64–6.

19 This is a recurrent observation inspired directly by *Iliad*, X.292–3 (*boun . . . admêtên*).

Earth would be satisfied with pregnant animals, Dionysos would be regularly associated (on vases) with a pig sacrifice<sup>20</sup> etc. But this kind of association is, I would say, artificial, as well as one-sided.

First of all, in order to distinguish – as far as this is possible – a particular bond between a victim and a divine or heroic power, it is not sufficient to take into consideration the literary or iconographical evidence only. It is also necessary to explore the ever-increasing quantity of inscriptions, as well as the osteological material which has become essential to the study of Greek religion during the last decades.<sup>21</sup> Now, it may happen, as in the case of Demeter, that our various sources (literary, epigraphical, archaeological etc.) agree, more or less, on the choice of the victim. As a matter of fact, they indicate the pig, particularly the piglet, as a very usual animal in the cult of the goddess. But this is rather exceptional. For the most part, the reality of cult practice in the Greek cities, as depicted through sacrificial calendars and other epigraphical evidence, presents a very different and multifaceted image, quite foreign to the stereotyped associations between gods and animals, often inspired by the mythical tradition. This variety, most evident in the inscriptions, is due, among other things, to the fact that each Greek city informs its own pantheon, its own particular deities, following a hierarchical mode proper to its history, to its traditions, but also to its financial capacities.

Now that we are aware of this diversity of sources and of the variety of cult practices among the Greek cities, we can go forward and suggest some reasons or factors likely to influence not only the choice of sacrificial animals but also the quantity of victims on various occasions. Thus, we can, for example, take the following into consideration:

1. The economic and budgetary reasons which constrain a city to balance its annual expenses, taking into account the current prices of cattle, the number of civic festivals to be celebrated during the year, the different distributions of meat (of equal or unequal character) decided by the People or other authorities etc.
2. The importance assigned to certain cults and festivals within the city for various reasons, as for instance the cult of Athena Polias in Athens: the impressive number of cows sacrificed in honour of the goddess on the Acropolis, during her festival of

20 Cf. S. Peirce, 'Death, revelry, and thysia', *ClAnt* 12 (1993), pp. 219–66 at 255f.

21 Cf. R. Hägg, 'Osteology and Greek sacrificial practice', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Archaeological Evidence* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1998), pp. 49–56.

the Great Panathenaia, shows, besides other things, the major role played by this cult in Athenian life.

3. The commercial capacities of a city to supply itself with animals from abroad (especially for the public festivals), when the internal market cannot satisfy the sacrificial needs of the people.
4. Reasons of *prestige* that push a city or an individual, such as the benefactor (*euergetês*) of the Hellenistic age, to choose costly victims, bovines in particular, as undeniable proof of their generosity and liberality towards the people, but also as a manifestation of their piety towards the gods.
5. Reasons due to the *ecosystem* of a region, favouring the breeding of certain animal species and not of others. As a significant example of this fact, we can mention the case of the Ionian city of Thebes (at Mount Mycale). According to a regulation, every year in the spring, the shepherds and the goatherds of the country must bring to the altar of Hermes Ktênitês (a protector of the beasts) a certain number of lambs and kids.<sup>22</sup> The choice of these sacrificial victims – the flesh of which will be distributed to all the inhabitants of the city – is due in a great measure to the nature of this region, which is very suitable for the breeding of smaller livestock, especially sheep and goats.
6. Finally, the *personality* of the divine or heroic recipient, woven through his or her own ‘history’ composed by myths, tales, narrations and images, as well as by cultic uses. From this point of view, the example of Hermes Ktênitês quoted above is very instructive, because, beyond the ‘ecosystemic’ reasons, the omnipresence of the ovicaprine species on the altar of the god is certainly due also to the close relation between this Hermes ‘of the beasts’ and the pastoral activity.

This enumeration could undoubtedly become longer; it is not intended to be exclusive, nor is the order significant. Let us attempt to answer a more precise question. How could we better apprehend the ‘intimacy’ between a divinity and a sacrificial victim that is sometimes detected? By way of experiment, I would like to explore briefly the sacrificial bond between Zeus and the piglet. Concerning the sacrifice of young animals, a rapid ‘statistical’ examination of the ‘sacred laws’ of Sokolowski<sup>23</sup> reveals that, whereas Apollo prefers lambs and

<sup>22</sup> *LSAM* no. 39.

<sup>23</sup> I will confine myself to his three volumes: *LSAM*, *LSCG* and *LSS*.

Dionysos takes pleasure in kids, Zeus, the greatest of the gods, seems to be fond of piglets.<sup>24</sup>

Modern scholars, mostly indifferent to 'statistics' of this kind,<sup>25</sup> regard the sacrifice of pigs or piglets to Zeus as something 'disconcerting' and try to find an unequivocal explanation of this fact.<sup>26</sup> From this point of view, the position of an important scholar such as Jane Harrison is very indicative. A partisan of the sociological evolutionistic current of her epoch, she thinks that 'pigs came to be associated with Demeter and the underworld divinities' because these divinities belong to a 'lower' stratum, to 'a stratum of thought more primitive than Homer'. The piglet, because it was a very cheap animal, was sacrificed by poor people to these old 'chthonian' deities. Consequently, Zeus, a pre-eminently 'Olympian' god, a god 'of the sky', would have nothing to do with pigs. If, exceptionally, he accepts a porcine victim, it is because he is then perceived in his 'underworld aspect', as Zeus Meilichios, Zeus-Hades.<sup>27</sup> According to A. B. Cook, 'the pig . . . was an animal commonly sacrificed to Zeus in his chthonian capacity'. From this point of view, the pig brought to the altar of Zeus Meilichios, or of Zeus Philios, for instance, 'is proof enough' that these gods are 'Underworld' powers.<sup>28</sup>

This one-sided theory reappears from time to time, in one way or

24 The piglet is sacrificed: to Zeus Epôpeteus, Erchia, *LSCG* no. 18 Γ 20–4 (holocaustic sacrifice); to Zeus Horios, Erchia, *LSCG* 18 E 28–30; to Zeus Hêraios, Athens, *LSCG* 1 A 20–1; to Zeus, Teithras, *LSS* 132 A 9–10; to Zeus Bouleus, Mykonos, *LSCG* 96, 17; to Zeus Polieus, Cos, *LSCG* 151 A 32–3 (holocaustic sacrifice); to Zeus Machaneus, Cos, *LSCG* 151 B 10–13 (holocaustic sacrifice); to Zeus Ataburios, Rhodes, *LSS* 109, 1–2. See also: a 'choice piglet' (*choiron kriton*, probably eaten), and a 'bought piglet to be wholly burnt' (*choiron ônêton holokauton*), sacrificed to Zeus Polieus, Thorikos, *SEG* 33.147 A 13–15, cf. Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law*, doc. 1, pp. 132–3; 'a piglet to Zeus' (*tôi Di choiron*), Selinus, *SEG* 43.630 B 5–7, cf. Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law*, doc. 27, p. 381. In this context, I omit the specific relation between Demeter and this animal. See, however, below.

25 The sacrifices of piglets are even omitted in his discussion of Athenian sacred calendars by V. Rosivach, *The System of Public Sacrifice in Fourth-Century Athens* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994); cf. the correct remarks of K. Clinton, 'Pigs in Greek rituals', in R. Hägg and B. Alroth (eds), *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 2005), pp. 167–79 at 174.

26 However, it seems that other scholars are not interested in this kind of relation between Zeus and the piglet. According to M. Jameson, 'Sacrifice and animal husbandry in classical Greece', in C. R. Whittaker (ed.), *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1988), pp. 87–119 at 98, for instance, these animals 'were used primarily (1) as minor offerings to figures who needed to be recognized in a larger complex of sacrifices . . . (2) as the preferred victim for Demeter . . . (3) as victims for purification'.

27 J. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1903] 1922<sup>3</sup>), pp. 12–31.

28 A. B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), pp. 1105–7, 1161.

another, especially when the piglet is burnt completely on the altar of Zeus: as a matter of fact, certain scholars continue to consider *every* holocaustic sacrifice as 'chthonian' by definition. Or, they are still thinking of pigs as pre-eminently 'chthonian'. It is not my purpose to return here to the complex question regarding the notion of *chthonios* and the so-called 'chthonian' divinities.<sup>29</sup> I only observe that, of all these different Zeuses who regularly receive the sacrifice of *choiroi* (see above, n. 24), not one can be reasonably qualified as being 'chthonian'. I could say the same for the well-known Zeus Meilichios, considered by the majority of scholars as essentially a 'chthonian' god,<sup>30</sup> whereas others are more subtle in their approach. However, in my opinion, the Zeus Meilichios to whom Xenophon offers the burning of piglets, as a holocaustic sacrifice (*ethueto kai hōlokautei choirous*), may have had nothing to do with the Underworld.<sup>31</sup>

Now, if these unilateral explanations seem rather inappropriate, is it possible to find any relevant elements in the personal 'history' of Zeus or in cult practice that would warrant a closer examination of the sacrificial relation between the god and the piglet? At first sight, I could suggest four facts, but a more thorough inquiry would certainly modify or improve these reflections.

To begin with, we can recall the mythical and very significant relationship between swine and Zeus, more specifically in the case of the Zeus born in Crete, where a sow had nourished the god as a child. This kind and attentive nurse had suckled the divine newborn, taking care to cover his cries by her own grunting, in order to keep the presence of the baby secret and protect him from the wrath of his father Kronos. It is true that, according to different mythical versions, other female animals had also given their milk to the little Zeus. However, only the sow is held in such high esteem by the Cretans, who considered this animal as 'much revered' (*perisepton*), so much so that they did not eat its flesh.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the Cretan city of Praisos offered sacrifices to the

29 Certain aspects of this question are discussed in Hägg and Alroth, *Greek Sacrificial Ritual*: more specifically, see the contribution of A. Henrichs, "Sacrifice as to the Immortals": modern classifications of animal sacrifice and ritual distinctions in the *lex sacra* from Selinous' (pp. 47–58), with previous bibliography. Also note the pertinent remarks of Clinton, 'Pigs'.

30 Cf., for example, recently, Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law*, p. 370–1 (Zeus Meilichios, as a 'kindly chthonian divinity').

31 Xen. *Anab.* 7.8.1–6 (this question should be reconsidered).

32 Agathocles of Cyzicus *FGrH* 472 F 1 (*ap.* Athen. 375F–376A). Referring to this passage, A. M. Bowie, 'Greek sacrifice: forms and functions', in A. Powell (ed.), *The Greek World* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 463–82 at 474, writes: 'the pigs sacrificed unusually to Zeus on Crete' were 'killed but not eaten because a sow had nourished the god as a child'; but there is no mention of such a sacrifice in this text.

sow (*hiera rhezousi hui*),<sup>33</sup> setting up, in this way, a real worship of an animal – a fact most unwonted in Greek cult practice.<sup>34</sup> Besides, it is noteworthy that this sacrifice is considered by the people of Praisos as *protelês* ('offered before marriage'), a marriage that they hope will be prolific, following the example of the sow, famous for her fecundity (see below).

In the second place, the association between Zeus and the piglet could be supported, even if indirectly, in the context of purification, where the piglet is omnipresent. On the whole, Kevin Clinton is right when he observes that the piglets, and other animals used in this context, 'were normally neither sacrificed nor directed to a particular deity'.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, Zeus, as the pre-eminent divinity of purification, the only god worshipped, as far as we know, under the *cult* epithet of *Katharsios*,<sup>36</sup> could not remain extraneous to such a recognized purificatory agent as the piglet, also called *katharsion* or *katharma*.<sup>37</sup> Besides, Zeus will be the first to perform purificatory rites on behalf of Ixion, the first murderer. Zeus will also be the first to 'cleanse' the polluted person (with his own hands, *cheroin*, says Aeschylus), sprinkling him with the blood of a slain piglet (*haimatos choiroktonou*).<sup>38</sup>

Thirdly, we can think of another kind of affinity which could favour the proximity between Zeus and the piglet. As is well known, Zeus is a god of abundance, sometimes holding the horn of plenty, the cornucopia. He is a great dispenser of goods and of wealth, implying, among other things, the fertility of soil, the fecundity of women.<sup>39</sup> I would venture to say that with these qualities, Zeus becomes a very voluntary recipient of porcine victims. He accepts with pleasure, on his altars, the progeniture of an animal characterized as *polutokon* and *polugonon* ('producing much offspring').<sup>40</sup>

33 Agathocles, *ibid*.

34 The sacrifice of an ox to the flies, just before the festival of Apollo at Actium, had another object: to make these importunate insects disappear (Ael. *NA* 11.8).

35 Clinton, 'Pigs', p. 179.

36 Cf. R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 139 and n. 143, with references. Zeus can also intervene in the process of purification under other epithets: for example, as Zeus Meilichios (Plut. *Thes.* 12.1), as Zeus Kappôtas (Paus. 3.22.1), as Zeus Phuxios (Paus. 3.17.8–9) etc.

37 Cf. Clinton, 'Pigs', p. 169.

38 Aesch. fr. 327 Radt. This act will be imitated later by his son Apollo, for the purification of Orestes, as is shown on some vases: R. R. Dyer, 'The evidence for Apolline purification rituals at Delphi and Athens', *JHS* 89 (1969), pp. 38–56. But the piglet is not really an animal of Apollo.

39 Zeus is himself a divinity who 'gives birth'. In the city of Aliphera (Arcadia), he is honoured as *Lecheatês* ('in childbed'), because 'here he gave birth (*tekontos*) to Athena' (Paus. 8.26.6).

40 Cf. Clinton, 'Pigs', p. 178.

Finally, this triangular relation between Zeus, the piglet and the notions of fertility, fecundity and abundance grows stronger with the presence of a fourth element, of another figure, that of Demeter, a divinity connected beyond any doubt with all these notions, although her manner of intervening within this sphere is not the same as that of her younger brother Zeus. This goddess is also a very important receiver of the porcine family; it is in her honour that people regularly sacrifice on her altars or dedicate to her sanctuaries *choiroi*, piglets, considered as a 'sign of generation of fruits and men' (*eis sunthêma tês geneseôs tôn karpôn kai tôn anthrôpôn*), in the context, for example, of the Thesmophoria.<sup>41</sup>

Now, Zeus is often associated with Demeter within the agricultural sphere, where the two divinities, acting in synergy, take care of the fertility of the land, look after the ripening of the corn, watch over the happy issue of the works in the fields.<sup>42</sup> The sacrificial calendar of Mykonos offers an excellent example of this association, to which Kore is often attached, as is the case also at Delos and elsewhere. On the tenth of the month of Lenaion, every year, three members of the porcine species must be sacrificed to these three related divinities: a pregnant sow giving birth for the first time (*hun enkumona prôto-tonon*) to Demeter, an adult boar (*kapron teleon*) to Kore, and a piglet (*choiron*) to Zeus Bouleus. This public sacrifice is explicitly ordered by the city *huper karpou*, 'for the sake of the fruits' of the earth.<sup>43</sup>

These, then, are some suggestions for a better understanding of this rather strange complicity between Zeus and the piglet.<sup>44</sup> I certainly do

41 *Scholia in Lucianum*, p. 276, 19–28, Rabe. Pregnant sows appear frequently as victims for Demeter, but this fact must be considered in the general context of the sacrifice of pregnant animals, a question to which I hope to return in a work in progress (*Des bêtes et des dieux: sacrifices et purifications dans le monde grec*). For the moment see J. N. Bremmer, 'The sacrifice of pregnant animals', in Hägg and Alroth, *Greek Sacrificial Ritual*, pp. 155–65.

42 The farmer of Hesiod prays, with the same object, to Zeus Chthonios and to Demeter Hagnê (Pure), when he begins ploughing (Hes. *Op.* 465–9). This Zeus Chthonios is by no means a god of the 'Underworld', as scholars often say. He is a Zeus of the 'earth' (*chthôn*), perceived here as cultivated or arable land. Within the same agricultural context, cf. also the cult of Zeus Georgos ('Cultivator', 'Farmer'): *LSCG* no. 52, 12–15 (Athens); or the cult of Zeus Karpophoros ('Fruit-bearing'), honoured with Demeter (Rhodes): D. Morelli, *I culti in Rodi, Studi Classici e Orientali* VIII [Pisa: Goliardica, 1959], p. 49. At Lindos, Zeus is even known as Damatrios (*ibid.*). Moreover, in various literary (or epigraphical) sources, Zeus is called Epikarpios ('Bringer' or 'Producer of fruits') and Karpodotês ('Giver of fruits') and he is considered as *karpôn aitios*, the 'cause of fruits'; cf. P. Brulé, *La Grèce d'à côté: Réel et imaginaire en miroir en Grèce antique* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007), pp. 418, 433–6, 438, with references.

43 *LSCG* no. 96, 15–17.

44 Another aspect of this relation, the offer of a *choiros* as *prothuma* to the god, in certain sacrifices, is beyond the scope of this chapter.



not mean to suggest that the sacrificers are conscious of all these facts when they kill or burn a *choiros* on the altar of the god. Moreover, it is probable that this choice is sometimes dictated by plain budgetary considerations, as noted above. Nevertheless, what this example shows is that the relations between gods and sacrificial victims may also be constructed against a background composed of a variety of elements, a kind of *poikilia* that likewise characterizes Greek sacrificial practices in general.

## GETTING IN CONTACT: CONCEPTS OF HUMAN–DIVINE ENCOUNTER IN CLASSICAL GREEK ART

*Anja Klöckner*

The encounter of humans with the divine, however it may be mediated, is central for many religions.<sup>1</sup> The way people conceive these encounters, the way they believe they perceive the divine, and the way they react to this contact are culture-specific. In this chapter I discuss as case studies some images referring to encounters of this kind, most of them from the fifth and fourth centuries BC. I point out their significant characteristics and I try to analyse these characteristics, arguing that different concepts of gods are reflected in different concepts of their presence. These different concepts are portrayed as much in the ways gods reveal themselves to humans as in the reactions of humans to the divine appearance.

An example may illustrate the cultural character of these concepts. In his famous marble statue of St Theresa in the Cornaro Chapel, Gianlorenzo Bernini sculpted an image of a woman perceiving the divine.<sup>2</sup> In this case, perception is interpreted as being totally possessed by the divine, as an ecstatic *unio mystica*. The result of this experience was, in St Theresa's own words, burning love towards God. In the world of classical Greek religion, this would be a rather strange concept. Greeks getting into contact with gods or supernatural beings usually do not show exaggerated reactions. If there is any emotion described in our sources, it is rather respectful, sometimes even fearful, reverence rather than joy – let alone love.

The sources which, until now, have been taken into account in order to analyse the phenomenon of human–divine contact in classical Greece are often written ones. Concepts of epiphany have been intensively discussed by many scholars, mainly from the viewpoint

1 The terms 'god', 'deity', 'divine' etc. are used in this chapter in a rather broad sense and not restricted to the Olympian gods only.

2 Ecstasy of St Theresa: I. Lavin, *Bernini: l'unità delle arti visive* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1980), pp. 77–140 figs. 147–53, 164–79.

of philologists and historians of religion.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the contribution of archaeologists has been quite restrained. This has its reason in the access to significant data. At first sight non-mythological images of human–divine encounters are rare.

On vases, for example, which are an important source of information on Greek religion, there are many images showing humans in sacrificial processions and preparing sacrifice,<sup>4</sup> but usually this ritual communication with the gods is not rendered as a direct encounter. Admittedly, the deities are often depicted together with their worshippers in one visual narrative, but their inclusion has no visible effect on the latter. Human reactions to divine appearance are rare, and praying is not shown very often. The gods are frequently separated from the humans, for example through architectural elements, and they hardly ever take notice of them. In some cases, as on the well-known krater of the Kleophon Painter from the third quarter of the fifth century BC in Ferrara, they appear as statues, at least statue-like, and they are meant to be understood as images of gods, not as really present.<sup>5</sup> Venerating a god can cause him to be present in his image,<sup>6</sup> and statues are of course potential places of epiphany. But this is not in the focus of the vase paintings: the statues are nearly always depicted as lifeless works of art.

However, there is a large group of images which until now have been taken into account only superficially in this context: the votive reliefs. They form a clear contrast to the aforementioned vases. These marble

3 B. Gladigow, 'Präsenz der Bilder – Präsenz der Götter', *Visible Religion* 4 (1986), pp. 114–33; H. S. Versnel, 'What did ancient man see when he saw a god? Some reflections on Greco-Roman epiphany', in D. Van der Plas (ed.), *Effigies Dei* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 42–55; B. Gladigow, 'Epiphanie, Statuette, Kultbild: Griechische Gottesvorstellungen im Wechsel von Kontext und Medium', *Visible Religion* 7 (1990), pp. 98–112, repr. in B. Gladigow, *Religionswissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft*, eds C. Auffarth and J. Rüpke (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), pp. 73–84; F. T. van Straten, 'The iconography of Greek cult in the archaic and classical Greece (abstract)', in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Iconography of Greek Cult in the Archaic and Classical Periods* = *Kernos* Suppl. 1 (Athens: CIERGA, 1992), pp. 47–8; R. Piettre, 'Images et perception de la présence divine en grèce ancienne', *MEFRA* 113 (2001), pp. 211–24; Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1.

4 F. T. van Straten, *Hiera kalá: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); J. Gebauer, *Pompe und Thysia: Attische Tieropferdarstellungen auf schwarz- und rotfigurigen Vasen* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002).

5 Att. rf. volute crater, Kleophon Painter, Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 44894 (T57CV P) (440–420 BC): *LIMC* II (1984), p. 220 no. 220 s.v. Apollon (W. Lambrinoudakis). Cf. W. Oenbrink, *Das Bild im Bilde: Zur Darstellung von Götterstatuen und Kultbildern auf griechischen Vasen* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997).

6 T. S. Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild: Untersuchungen zur Funktion griechischer Kultbilder in Religion und Politik* (Munich: Beck, 2000).

slabs were dedicated in sanctuaries in large quantities, especially in the late fifth and in the fourth century. Many of them not only show, like the vases, mortals and immortals together in one visual narrative, but they also show their direct encounter: the interaction between the human and divine spheres.<sup>7</sup> Interaction is highly significant with regard to the question of whether a depiction of a god is meant to be an image or the god *in personam*. Indications of epiphany, which are described in literature, are not suitable for images: heavenly scent and radiance cannot be visualized, whereas size, beauty and splendour are not distinctive, but conventional elements of divine iconography in general. Specific pictorial strategies had to be developed to characterize gods as being present, and in these interaction played an important role.

A relief from the Asklepion of Athens may be taken as an example (Fig. 6.1).<sup>8</sup> Six men - the inscription tells us the names of five of them, they are doctors - are venerating Asklepios, Demeter and Kore. No architectural framing separates the gods from the worshippers; they are interacting with gestures. The gods are portrayed as being present - not as statues, but personally present, recognizable to the worshippers and recognizing them. It would be naïve to understand these images literally, but we should take them seriously, especially their attempt to show the gods as if they were real.

The importance of human-divine interaction on the votive reliefs can be explained by their function, which is narrative as well as documentary and representative. Visualizing the visit to the sanctuary not only as prayer in front of statues, but as an encounter with the gods *in personam*, demonstrates that the ritual communication has reached its goal. The dedicants, erecting solid marble slabs adorned with images of this kind, try to depict this encounter but also to perpetuate it in the medium of the relief. Of course the reliefs do not mirror the actions in the sanctuaries, but they transform them into images, based on iconographic and typological patterns used in contemporary art.

Even if some images of the deities reflect common statue types, this use of pictorial patterns does not imply that the gods are generally to

7 Cf. C. L. Lawton, 'Children in classical Attic votive reliefs', in A. Cohen and J. B. Rutter (eds), *Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy = Hesperia*, Suppl. 41 (2007), pp. 41–60 at 41: 'The compositions themselves are idealized constructions, with the gods or heroes appearing to the worshippers as epiphanies in their sanctuaries.'

8 Athens, National Museum 1332, from the Asklepion of Athens (c.350 BC): N. Kaltsas, *Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002), pp. 224–5: cat. no. 472 with fig.; A. Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci di periodo arcaico e classico* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2002), p. 196: cat. no. Atene 77 fig. 110.



Figure 6.1 Votive relief from the Asklepieion of Athens: six physicians venerating Asklepios, Demeter and Kore (Athens, NM 1332).

be understood as in statue form.<sup>9</sup> Only a few, mostly late, examples depict the gods unequivocally as lifeless sculptures. A Hellenistic votive in Venice demonstrates a fundamental difference in comparison to the Athenian relief.<sup>10</sup> It is dedicated to Kybele and Attis, who are clearly marked as cult statues. They appear in overwhelming superiority, rigid and without any contact with the humans. The worshippers have to enter through a door into the temple, which stresses the difference between the human and divine sphere, while in the relief from the Asklepieion they are both combined into one spatial unit. Here the gods are shown as acting and partly also reacting to the humans, and vice versa.

The dedication of the Athenian doctors is only one example of a wide range of comparable images. Some gods have very specific modes of presenting themselves to the dedicants. On the other hand, the dedicants are also characterized in different ways. The contacts between mortals and immortals are shown in various manners. Discussing

9 L. E. Baumer, *Vorbilder und Vorlagen: Studien zu klassischen Frauenstatuen und ihrer Verwendung für Reliefs und Statuetten des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts vor Christus* (Bern: Stämpfli, 1997).

10 Venice, AM 118: *LIMC* III (1986), p. 40 no. 389\* s.v. Attis (M. J. Vermaseren and M. B. de Boer).

some significant examples, I want to start with the human reactions to the divine appearance.

### EMOTIONS AND GENDER

The reverence of the worshippers in front of the deities is shown in a rather discreet way. Usually, the worshippers are praying in an upright position, having raised their right hand. But sometimes body language and gestures are more expressive. A fine example is a votive for Kybele from Tripoli,<sup>11</sup> dated to the second half of the fourth century BC. Kybele is depicted in front of a group of worshippers, enthroned and motionless. But it is obvious that the goddess is meant to be present at this specific moment. Her sight causes clearly recognizable reactions in the dedicants. Some of the women are leaning back the upper part of their bodies, whereas the male dedicants are standing still firmly upright. The women are shrinking back, which shows their fear and their awe when face to face with the divine counterpart.

This can be taken as an iconographic rule in the votive reliefs. It is mainly women who show emotional gestures towards the divinity's appearance, such as shrinking back, throwing themselves on their knees or raising both hands instead of one in prayer. On a relief from Chalkis, a woman is venerating Dionysos and Plouton in this manner (Fig. 6.2).<sup>12</sup> Her reverence before the gods also causes her to lean back slightly. A votive to Zeus in Dresden is a good example of the different reactions of men and women in the presence of a god.<sup>13</sup> It contrasts the kneeling woman, who tries to touch the god, with the self-controlled man, standing upright and showing his respect to the god in a decently restrained way.

11 Tripoli, Archaeological Museum 5767: T. Spyropoulos, 'Νέα γλυπτά αποκτήματα του Αρχαιολογικού Μουσείου Τριπόλεως', in O. Palagia and W. Coulson (eds), *Sculpture from Arcadia and Laconia* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1993), pp. 262 ss. fig. 7; A. Datsouli-Stavridi, Γλυπτά του Αρχαιολογικού Μουσείου Τρίπολης: Περιγραφικός Κατάλογος (Athens: Περγαμήνη, 1997), p. 35: fig. 15; M. Edelmann, *Menschen auf griechischen Weihreliefs* (Munich: tuduv-Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1999), p. 218: cat. no. F 46.

12 Chalkis, Museum 337, from Karystos (after 350 BC): G. Daux, 'Le relief éleusinien du Musée de Chalcis', *BCH* 88 (1964), pp. 433–41 fig. 1 pls. 19–20; E. Sapouna Sakellarakis, *Chalkis: History – Topography and Museum* (Athens: Archaeological Receipts Fund, 1995), pp. 89–90: fig. 54; Edelmann, *Menschen*, p. 74: cat. no. B 63.

13 Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Skulpturensammlung 2602: H. Protzmann, *Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden: Skulpturensammlung. Griechische Skulpturen und Fragmente* (Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 1989), p. 39: no. 18 fig. 18; Edelmann, *Menschen*, p. 242: cat. no. U 128; Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 223: cat. no. Scon. 14.



*Figure 6.2* Votive relief from Karystos: woman venerating Dionysos and Ploutos, raising both hands in prayer (Chalkis, Museum 337).

Fearful reactions and striking gestures of veneration can depict the stunning impression produced by the presence of the divine. They are used to stress the god's overwhelming appearance, but also to show the unfortunate inability of women to face it with self-control. In the case of these images, the concepts of the gender-typical behaviour of males and females are at least as important as the concept of human reaction to epiphany in general. The main aim of the votives is not to show the dedicants in a state of fear or commotion. It is important to show that they are venerating in a correct, fitting manner, according to their age, gender and social status. They are not meant to prove exaggerated devotion.

## CARING GODS

The various images showing the gods demonstratively turning themselves from their divine sphere towards their human counterparts depict this movement with varying intensity. The deities and their worshippers can be shown in close contact, referring to each other with gestures. Some deities are even bending down to their worshippers.<sup>14</sup> The votive stelai, seeming at first sight very schematic, are sculpted with a meaningful variety, even if the sculptor has rather modest abilities.

The closeness of the human–divine encounter finds its clearest expression when a god touches humans. This kind of divine care manifests itself most often in the reliefs presented to the healing gods such as Asklepios and Amphiaraos.<sup>15</sup> This may be rooted in the fact that the numerous votive reliefs coming from the healing sanctuaries are offerings intended to give thanks for successful healings. In most cases, this presupposes a successful incubation – and successful incubation includes epiphany. The whole ritual, a kind of divination technique, aims at getting in direct, personal contact with the god and his healing power.<sup>16</sup> Some of the participants in this cult even claim to have experienced for themselves the concrete intervention of the god while asleep. It is not astonishing that such experiences find their expression in images of a caring, touching god. But it is illuminating to analyse how far this concept can be developed in visual art, and what consequences this concept of a god has for his imagery. To sum up: Asklepios is not only shown as caring, he is also shown as quite similar to humans.

Asklepios is usually clad in the large *himation*, the typical dress of the Athenian citizen. Like them, he leans on a long stick. On the votive reliefs, he is often accompanied by his family, his wife and his children. Both dress and the presence of an intact, stable family are unusual for

14 Cf. e. g. Kephisos on the votive of Xenokrateia, Athens, National Museum 2756 (late fifth century BC): Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, p. 133: cat. no. 257 with fig.

15 Cf. e.g. Amphiaraos looking after Archinos on a votive from Oropos, Athens, National Museum 3369 (c.400–350 BC): *LIMC* I (1981), p. 702 no. 63\*; 710 s.v. Amphiaraos (I. Krauskopf); Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, pp. 209–210, cat. no. 425 with fig.; Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 131: fig. 134. 216 cat. no. Oropos 5. On the double nature of the healers as both heroes and gods see J. W. Riethmüller, *Asklepios: Heiligtümer und Kulte*, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 2005).

16 F. Graf, 'Heiligtum und Ritual: Das Beispiel der griechisch-römischen Asklepieia', in A. Schachter (ed.), *Le sanctuaire grec* (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1992), pp. 159–99; *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 18 (1998), pp. 179–265 at 180, 183 s.v. Inkubation (M. Wacht). The presence of the gods is necessary for the success of the incubation: Plut. *De def. or.* 5, 412 A.



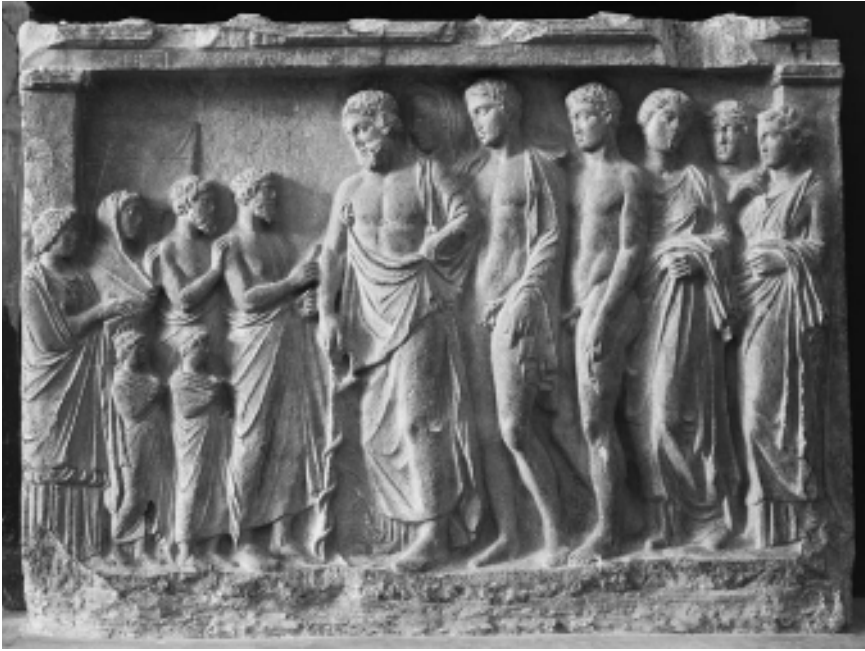


Figure 6.3 Votive relief for Asklepios and his family, venerated by a group of adorants (Athens, NM 1402).

images of gods outside of the healing cults. This iconography assimilates him to his worshippers. In a relief from the second quarter of the fourth century BC, densely packed with figures, divine and human family would be nearly interchangeable, if it were not for their difference in size (Fig. 6.3).<sup>17</sup> The hierarchic scale ('Bedeutungsgröße') clearly demonstrates that this likeness means only approximation, not equality.

But this remarkable trend towards rendering Asklepios as similar to an Attic citizen goes even further. In a relief from the Athenian Asklepieion the god is not sitting upright, as usual (Fig. 6.4).<sup>18</sup>

17 Athens, National Museum 1402: *LIMC* II (1984), p. 883 no. 248\* s.v. Asklepios (B. Holtzmann); Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, p. 210: cat. no. 428 with fig.; Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 228: cat. no. Thyreatide 1 fig. 144; A. Klöckner, 'Habitus und Status: Geschlechtsspezifisches Rollenverhalten auf griechischen Weihreliefs', in *Die griechische Klassik: Idee oder Wirklichkeit. Exhibition Berlin – Bonn* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2002), pp. 321–4: cat. no. 217 with fig. The nudity of the sons of Asklepios is also in sharp contrast to the habitus of the worshippers.

18 Athens, National Museum 1338 (c.400 BC): A. Klöckner, 'Menschlicher Gott und göttlicher Mensch? Zu einigen Weihreliefs für Asklepios und die Nymphen', in R. von den Hoff and S. Schmidt (eds), *Konstruktionen von Wirklichkeit: Bilder im Griechenland des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001), pp. 130 ss. fig. 3; Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, p. 141: cat. no. 268 with fig.; Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 197: cat. no. Atene 83 fig. 99.



Figure 6.4 Votive relief from the Asklepieion of Athens: worshipper venerating Hygieia and Asklepios (Athens, NM 1338).

Instead, he has drooping shoulders and a rounded back. His feet are not in front of the chair, but pulled back. Aged men sit in this same way on contemporary Attic grave reliefs, for example on the stele of Theodoros and Praxiteles.<sup>19</sup> Asklepios is not only shown in the attire and the attitude of an Athenian citizen, he is even shown like a feeble and old one. But using the iconographic pattern of aged men to depict a god cannot be taken as an indication of any kind of weakness. Asklepios is shown like a dignified head of a respectable *oikos*. It is his daughter Hygieia who turns herself to the worshippers, extending her right hand towards his head and demonstrating the divine concern for his needs.

This votive is not a singular piece; there are other comparable images. They are all examples of a certain concept of epiphany, where gods reveal themselves to their worshippers as caring. The gods are giving their attention to them, and, in turn, they are venerated attentively by single men, as this example shows, and single women, but also

19 H. Diepolder, *Die attischen Grabreliefs des 5. und 4. Jhs.* (Berlin: Keller, 1931), pp. 30–1; pl. 24, 1; Klöckner, ‘Menschlicher Gott’, p. 133: fig. 4.

by numerous families: every combination is possible. Nevertheless, this strikingly narrow contact of men and gods is only one way to represent human–divine encounters on the votive reliefs. Other deities reveal themselves in a completely different mode.

### THE TRANSITORY MOMENT

Another way to characterize deities as being present is to make them move. This transitory moment is especially essential for the appearance of nymphs. Some votive reliefs show the goddesses sitting or standing quietly,<sup>20</sup> but on most of them the nymphs are dancing.<sup>21</sup> A well-known relief in Berlin can be taken as an example (Fig. 6.5).<sup>22</sup> In rapid movement, the nymphs are passing by in front of the worshipper; the cloth is fluttering around their legs. The image is like a snapshot of a fluid sequence of movements. The nymphs do not seem to take any notice of the worshipper, who is conspicuously small compared to the tall deities. Another votive in Berlin is able to demonstrate that the images are not combinations of incoherent pictorial patterns, but are meant to take place in a unity of time and space.<sup>23</sup> The deities and the worshippers are together in the sanctuary, which is characterized by the indication of the cave and the altar made of irregular fieldstones. Again the deities are towering above the humans, which characterizes their epiphany as an overwhelming experience.

In the majority of the reliefs the nymphs are dancing alone, no humans beside them. Only a few of them display worshippers as well, which constitutes a significant difference from votives offered to other deities. We notice a striking concentration on certain types of worshippers. Especially in the early high-quality votives, such as the relief

20 Standing or sitting: R. Feibel, *Die attischen Nymphenreliefs und ihre Vorbilder* (Heidelberg: Lippl, 1935), pp. 1–14 cat. I–VI; G. Güntner, *Göttervereine und Götterversammlungen auf attischen Weihreliefs* (Würzburg: Tritsch, 1994), pp. 10 ss., cat. nos. A 1, A 7–8, A 15–16, A 18, A 21–2, A 36, A 45, A 47, A 52, A 54. Cf. e.g. Athens, National Museum 2012, found in the Vari Cave (330–320 BC): Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, p. 218: cat. no. 452 with fig.; G. Schörner and H. R. Goette, *Die Pan-Grotte von Vari* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2004), pp. 71–4: cat. no. R 6 pl. 42, 1–2.

21 Dancing: Feibel, *Die attischen Nymphenreliefs*, pp. 15–44, cat. 1–27; Güntner, *Göttervereine*, cat. nos. A 2–6, A 9, A 13–14, A 17, A 19–20, A 23–35, A 37–44, A 48–9, A 51, A 53.

22 Berlin, Staatliche Museen Sk 709 A: Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, pp. 221–2: cat. no. Roma 4 fig. 86.

23 Berlin, Staatliche Museen 711 (from Megara): C. M. Edwards, *Greek Votive Reliefs to Pan and the Nymphs* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1985), cat. nos. 28, 50, 59, 71, 77.



Figure 6.5 Votive relief with the dancing nymphs and Hermes, venerated by a single worshipper (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Sk 709A).

in Berlin mentioned above, the worshippers are male.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, in the inscriptions, apart from a few exceptions,<sup>25</sup> only male dedicants are named. This is conspicuous, because women as dedicators of votive reliefs in general are of considerable importance and, moreover, women participated in the cults of the nymphs.<sup>26</sup> Families as worshippers in reliefs for the nymphs are very rare and figure almost exclusively in some late examples of rather poor quality.<sup>27</sup> This is also

24 Athens, National Museum 1329 (from the south slope of the Acropolis). 4465 + 4465 a, 4466 + 4466 a (from Penteli): Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 196, cat. no. Atene 74 fig. 43; p. 217: cat. no. Pentelico 1–2 figs. 141–2; Athens, National Museum 2646, from Parnes: Edwards, *Greek Votive Reliefs*, pp. 562–4: cat. no. 37; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Sk 709 A: Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, pp. 221–2: cat. no. Roma 4 fig. 86. Cf. the dedication to the Charites from Kos: Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 207: cat. no. Cos 2 fig. 83.

25 Dedication of the daughters of Kleonothos, Athens, National Museum 3529 (c. 400–350 BC): Edwards, *Greek Votive Reliefs*, pp. 388–92: cat. no. 7; dedication of Dexippa, Rome, Museo Barracco (Hellenistic): *LIMC* I (1981), p. 25 no. 211\* s.v. Acheloos (Isler); Güntner, *Göttervereine*, pp. 10 ss., p. 125: no. A 43 pl. 9, 2. Cf. Schörner and Goette, *Die Pan-Grotte*, p. 76.

26 E. Vikela, *Attische Weihreliefs und die Kult-Topographie Attikas*, *MDAI(A)* 112 (1997), pp. 167–246 at 171; Edelmann, *Menschen*, pp. 141 ss.

27 Athens, Agora Museum S 2905; Athens, National Museum 2796 (from Vari). 3874 (from Ekali); Berlin, Staatliche Museen 711 (from Megara): Edwards,

noteworthy, because families are the most common type of worshippers on the votive reliefs in general.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, in the case of the nymphs the act of veneration is a less attractive subject to depict than apparitions of goddesses frolicking through nature, who are conceived as friendly and frightening, as helpful and dangerous at the same time. The transitory moment of the dance stresses the suddenness of their epiphany. Apparently the typical pattern of adoration is not apt to express the reaction caused by the epiphany of the nymphs. In the images of the nymphs, interaction, even contact between men and gods is avoided – as in the construction of religious reality, where the direct encounter with nymphs was imagined as potentially harmful. And obviously images of the nymph's apparition were not suitable for votives of women and families, but mainly for men.<sup>29</sup>

Quite often the votives for Aphrodite render her epiphany as a transitory moment too. The images depict the suddenness of her appearance especially on the reliefs showing the goddess riding on a goat.<sup>30</sup> This iconographic pattern is used in other media of the same time as well.<sup>31</sup> But while these images take place in undefined time and space, the images on the votive reliefs seem to stand for Aphrodite's revelation in a specific sanctuary. On a fourth-century slab from the Athenian agora, which is unfortunately very much damaged, one can see an altar under Aphrodite's feet. This altar makes clear that the image does not show the goddess hovering through the air in an undefined place at some time or other, but rather that she is revealing herself to the spectator at a certain moment and at a certain sacred place in a fleeting movement – a transitory moment of appearance.<sup>32</sup> Remarkably enough, families are almost totally lacking on votives for Aphrodite in general. In most cases it is a single person who shows his or her reverence towards the goddess. Various iconographic elements

*Greek Votive Reliefs*, cat. nos. 28, 50, 59, 71, 77. Cf. the relief of Adamas in the quarry of Ag. Minas, Paros: *LIMC* VIII Suppl. (1997), p. 737 no. 8\* s.v. Kouretes, Korybantes (R. Lindner).

28 Edelmann, *Menschen*, pp. 90–164.

29 Klöckner, 'Menschlicher Gott'.

30 E. Mitropoulou, *Aphrodite auf der Ziege* (Athens: Pyli, 1975), pp. 7–14, nos. 1–5 figs. 1–5. See also Athens, Agora Museum S 1491. S 1944: C. M. Edwards, 'Aphrodite on a ladder', *Hesperia* 53 (1984), pp. 59–72 at 70–1: pls. 18 b–c.

31 Mitropoulou, *Aphrodite*, pp. 14–34: nos. 6–35; *LIMC* II (1984), pp. 98–100 s.v. Aphrodite (A. Delivorrias). See also Paus. 6.25.1: cult image in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Elis, bronze statue of the goddess riding on a billy-goat.

32 Athens, Agora Museum S 1797: Edwards, 'Aphrodite', pp. 70–1: pl. 17 b. Cf. A. Klöckner and C. Wulfmeier, 'Eine Epiphanie der Aphrodite', in *Classical Archaeology towards the Third Millennium* (Alkmaar: Ter Burg, 1999), pp. 216–18.

connect goddess and dedicators and stress the intimate character of the encounter. These votives have been set up on behalf not of groups, but of individuals, as certain aspects of her divine power are experienced in a very individual way.

## ENCOUNTERING THE HEROES

After this rough overview of different modes of divine epiphany, I would like to concentrate now, as a certain contrast, on corresponding images of heroes. It seems to be generally agreed that in late classical times the heroes were so enormously popular because they were believed to be especially 'near' to the humans – easily approachable in cult, supposedly not as removed as the traditional deities. To what extent, however, can such ideas be traced in the imagery? Do the reliefs for the heroes show specific modes of encounter with the humans or are they orientated on the patterns used in the votives for the gods?

In this regard, the basis for our investigation is quite broad: votives for heroes are very numerous. From the late fifth through the whole fourth century BC they are by far the most popular votive reliefs of all. As in the votives for the gods, the images stress that the heroes are really present in the situation of veneration; not as statues, but *in personam*. This presence is again mainly shown by action and movement, by great attention to the worshippers and transitory moments. Concerning the strategies of visual narrative in this regard, there are no fundamental differences between votives for the heroes and votives for the gods.

Votive reliefs for Herakles, for example, often show the care of the hero towards his worshippers. He refers to them with gestures or touches the sacrificial animals, demonstrating that the offering is satisfactory.<sup>33</sup> The importance of the transitory moment is particularly evident on the numerous reliefs for equestrian heroes (Fig. 6.6).<sup>34</sup> In Attica, contemporary equestrian statues are not documented,<sup>35</sup> and thus any allusion to statues is out of question. The depictions of the riding heroes are obviously not to be meant as images of them, but as sudden epiphanies

33 Cf. e.g. Athens, National Museum 2723 (c.370 BC): Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, pp. 212–13: cat. no. 433 with fig.; Venice, Archaeological Museum 100 (late fifth century BC): Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 224: cat. no. Scon. 37 fig. 90.

34 LIMC VI (1992), pp. 1019–81 s.v. Heros Equitans (A. Cermanovic-Kuzmanovic et. al.). Cf. e.g. a votive for Theseus in Paris, Louvre 743 (early fourth century BC): M. Flashar et al., *Theseus: Der Held der Athener* (Munich: Biering and Brinkmann, 2003), pp. 33–5. 46 cat. no. 10 fig. 33. The hero touches his helmet, which gives the setting a momentary character.

35 H. von Roques de Maumont, *Antike Reiterstandbilder* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1958), pp. 14–21.



Figure 6.6 Votive relief for an equestrian hero, venerated by a single worshipper (Piraeus, AM 2041).

before their worshippers. The rearing up of the horse visualizes not only the dynamic of the youthful hero, but also the momentary character of his appearance. Its suddenness can be stressed by the fluttering *chlamys* or a running attendant. Even the votives where the hero has already dismounted from the horse show, although more subtly, a transitory moment. The hero is not standing quietly, he is in action – in a sacral action, because he is going to make a libation from the cup in his right hand, which is filled by his female companion.

But we have omitted until now the largest group of hero reliefs of all: the votives for a banqueting hero (Fig. 6.7).<sup>36</sup> These stelai show a

36 R. Thönges-Stringaris, 'Das griechische Totenmahl', *MDAI(A)* 80 (1965), pp. 1–99; J.-M. Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet couché dans le Proche-Orient et le monde grec du VIIe au IVe siècle avant J.-C.* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1982), pp. 301–64, 453–528; van Straten, *Hierà kalà*, pp. 92–100; J. Fabricius, *Die hellenistischen Totenmahlreliefs: Grabrepräsentation und Wertvorstellungen in ostgriechischen Städten* (Munich: Pfeil, 1999), pp. 21–7; N. Himmelmann, 'Symposionfragen', in M. Şahin and I. Hakan Mert (eds), *Ramazan Özgan'a Armağan* (Istanbul: Yayınları, 2005), pp. 149–61. On the cult of the heroes, their sanctuaries and their iconography in general see *ThesCRA* II (2004), pp. 125–58; J. N. Bremmer, 'The rise of the hero cult and the new Simonides', *ZPE* 158 (2007), pp. 15–26.



Figure 6.7 Votive relief from Megara: a banqueting hero and his companion, venerated by a group of worshippers (Paris, Louvre Ma 2417).

heroic couple, venerated by adorants. The bearded, long-haired hero reclines on a *kline*, which is customarily covered with a large cloth. He wears a *himation* and often a *polos*, a cylindrical headgear. In most cases, he turns his head frontally out of the image. Usually he handles drinking vessels: a *rhyton* in his right and a *phiale* in his left hand. Wine is flowing from the one to the other. His consort, clad in *chiton* and *himation*, sits at his feet. Frequently she spreads incense on a *thymiaterion*, an incense burner, which stands on a side table in front of the *kline*. This table is loaded with vegetarian food: fruits, bread and cakes. Nearly always, there is a wine pourer serving the heroic couple. On the left-hand side of the reliefs, the worshippers are approaching: sometimes individuals and couples, often families. The wide range of worshippers is similar to that in the votives of Asklepios.

As far as we know from the inscriptions, these reliefs were mostly dedicated to various heroes and only a few of them to minor gods. Often the heroes are left nameless and the votive inscriptions are addressed only to τῷ ἥρω, 'the hero'. The contemporary spectator could nevertheless easily identify the addressees through the context of the original setting. These settings, unfortunately, are almost completely unknown to us. Only a few reliefs come from larger sanctuaries, but most of them do not have a recorded find spot. Like the



votives for the equestrian heroes, they appear to have been erected in the numerous small hero shrines, which were ubiquitous in ancient Greek cities and which were often very modest in size, design and furnishing. Statues in such hero shrines were rare, and we know of no sculpture of a hero in the pose of a banqueter.

When, from the end of the sixth century BC, votive reliefs became customary as media of religious communication, there was a demand for such offerings to the popular heroes, too. But in contrast to the other addressees of these votives, no iconography was established for the various local heroes. A suitable image had to be created – and the image of the banqueting hero seems to have been a perfectly suitable creation, since it was reproduced time and again, hundreds upon hundreds with only minor variations. The reliefs use and transform traditional iconographic patterns from different sources. The pattern of the reclining banqueter had been in use in Greek art since the late seventh century BC in many media and for many deities and heroes, especially Herakles, and for human banqueters too.<sup>37</sup> The votives are constructions of a heroic image, referring to luxury, delightful consumption and the pleasures of dining,<sup>38</sup> values which had been very popular in contemporary discourse and which were important for the dedicants.

What is more, it has been argued that this visual narrative seems to be perfectly apt for the hero reliefs for reasons of ritual. The offering of food on a table and the invitation to the hero to participate in the prepared meal play an important role in hero cult, especially in the cults of the Dioskouroi and of Herakles.<sup>39</sup> Therefore the reliefs have been interpreted not only as representing a banqueting hero, but as representing the hero participating in a banquet, which was dedicated to him by his human venerators (*theoxenia*).<sup>40</sup> The Scholiast to Pindar's

37 B. Fehr, *Orientalische und griechische Gelage* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1971); Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet*, pp. 71–300; P. Schmitt Pantel, *La cité au banquet: Histoire des repas publics dans les cités grecques* (Rome: Ecole Française, 1997<sup>2</sup>); S. Wolf, *Herakles beim Gelage: Eine motiv- und bedeutungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Bildes in der archaisch-frühklassischen Vasenmalerei* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993).

38 Cf. Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet*; Fabricius, *Die hellenistischen Totenmahlreliefs*; Himmelman, 'Symposionfragen'.

39 G. Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 12 (Liège: CIERGA, 2002); G. Ekroth, 'Heroes and hero cults', in D. Ogden (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 100–14.

40 Thönges-Stringaris, 'Das griechische Totenmahl', pp. 62–8; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 213; M. H. Jameson, 'Theoxenia', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1994), pp. 35–57, on the banquet reliefs 49–53; J. Bravo, 'Heroic epiphanies: narrative, visual, and cultic contexts', *ICS* 29 (2004), pp. 63–84; M. Seifert, 'Überlegungen zu Weihreliefs in Athen aus klassischer Zeit', *Hephaistos* 25 (2007), pp. 257–73.

Third Olympian Ode describes the heroic guests invited to the *theoxenia* as τῶν ἐπιδημούντων, ‘the ones who are visiting’, which suggests the idea of temporary presence. The ritual practice can be understood as an instance of trying to bring about divine appearance. Against this background, the images of the banqueting heroes have been read as related to heroic epiphany<sup>41</sup> – ideally suitable for supernaturals who were conceived to be especially close to their worshippers.

Now, in the votive reliefs, the pattern of the banqueting hero is undoubtedly used in the context of ritual. But does this mean that the image also depicts a certain ritual, the *theoxenia*, well attested in hero cult? This is problematic for many reasons, relating to the iconography as much as to the structure of the visual narrative. The characteristics of the banquet reliefs mentioned so far have no equivalents in images of *theoxenia* which we can confidently regard as such. These images are comprised of a group of vase paintings and reliefs showing *trapezai* and *klinai*, ready for the Dioskouroi.<sup>42</sup> The images differ in details, but the structure is always the same. The humans are involved in the final preparations or are standing around the *kline* or the *trapeza*, waiting for the apparition of the deities. The Dioskouroi are riding in quick movements through the air or have already dismounted from their horses. They will arrive very soon, but are not yet there; their epiphany is to be perceived in a few moments. The focus is on the transitory moment. The Dioskouroi are shown as arriving, but not as banqueting. The *kline* is ready for use, but not yet occupied. The wine pourer, an animal sacrifice or preparations for it as on the votive reliefs are never shown. This iconography differs significantly from that of the banquet reliefs. It could be argued that new iconographic patterns for a certain group of heroes had been developed in these votives, independent of the pictorial tradition of the vase

(footnote 40 *continued*)

Sceptical towards the interpretation of the banquet reliefs as theoxenies: Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet*, pp. 513–27; Fabricius, *Die hellenistischen Totenmahlreliefs*, pp. 25–7. On *theoxenia* in general cf. Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults*, pp. 136–40, 177–9, 276–86, 304–5; *ThesCRA* II (2004), pp. 225–9; F. Hölscher, ‘Götterstatuen bei Lectisternien und Theoxenien?’, in F. Hölscher and T. Hölscher (eds), *Römische Bilderwelten: Von der Wirklichkeit zum Bild und zurück* (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 2007), pp. 27–40.

41 Bravo, ‘Heroic epiphanies’, pp. 73–6.

42 *LIMC* III (1986), pp. 576–7 nos. 112–16, 118 s.v. Dioskouroi (A. Hermay); E. Köhne, *Die Dioskuren in der griechischen Kunst von der Archaik bis zum Ende des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 1998), pp. 128–33. See also a still unpublished kalix krater from Phtiotis in Lamia, Archaeological Museum, Niobid-Painter (470–450 BC): E. Stamoudi in *Αρχαιολογικές Έρευνες και Μεγάλα Δημόσια Έργα. Αρχαιολογική Συνάντηση Εργασίας* (Thessaloniki, Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού 2003), p. 164, fig. on p. 165; Bravo, ‘Heroic epiphanies’, p. 74: no. 41.

paintings and the iconography of the Dioskouroi; that a totally new, specific iconography for the *theoxenia* of these heroes was shaped. But the visual narrative of the banquet reliefs gives us no such indication in this regard.

It has to be taken into account that the banqueting reliefs show a detail which is never found either in banquets of humans or in banquets of other deities: they show the animal sacrifice as a pending action. The servant preparing the sacrifice and the sacrificial victim appear very often on banquet reliefs. To use statistics: they are depicted in the banqueting reliefs more than twice as often as on reliefs for other deities.<sup>43</sup> The servant guiding the animal to the altar seems to be very important for the dedicators. Apparently the emphasis of the images is put at least as much on the animal sacrifice as on the food on the table. Again we can find a parallel in ritual practice, where the preparation of a sacrificial table is often combined with animal sacrifice.<sup>44</sup> But again we have to ask the question whether the images are depictions of specific ritual actions. The images give no hint whatsoever that the *trapeza* is of any importance for the worshippers - in sharp contrast to the sacrificial victim, and also in contrast to the small number of votive reliefs dedicated to other deities where a *trapeza* is definitely prepared. On these votives, the dedicants are always rendered near the table. And besides, the deity is never represented as banqueter.<sup>45</sup> The fact that the preparing of a *trapeza* is not a popular motif on votive reliefs at all makes sense if we take into account the dedicators' desire for prestigious representation. In the semantic system of the votives, a reference to a costly animal sacrifice confers more symbolic capital than a reference to a rather modest offering of vegetarian goods.

On the banquet reliefs, the *trapeza* is not meant to represent a cultic meal, offered by the worshippers, but as belonging to the sphere of the heroic couple and their joyful existence. The table is clearly separated

43 For banquet reliefs with animal sacrifice see van Straten, *Hierà kalá*, pp. 92–100.

44 Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults*, pp. 276–86.

45 A kneeling woman prepares a table for Pankrates, Athens, Fethiye Camii P 8 A (c. 300 BC): E. Vikela, *Die Weihreliefs aus dem Athener Pankrates-Heiligtum am Ilissos: Religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung und Typologie* = Suppl. 16 *MDAI(A)* (Berlin: Mann, 1994), pp. 22–3: cat. no. A 12 pl. 10. Cf. Athens, National Museum 3942 (early Hellenistic): Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, pp. 216–17: cat. no. 448 with fig. On five late reliefs, Men is riding on a cock or a ram over a *trapeza*: *LIMC* VI (1992), pp. 469–70 nos. 113–116\*, 126\* s.v. Men (R. Vollkommer). On two fragmentary votives with a table, the sacrificial victim was perhaps represented on the missing part of the relief. Cf. Athens, Acropolis Museum 2452 (A) (about 350 BC): C. Wulfmeier, *Griechische Doppelreliefs* (Münster: Scriptorium, 2005) cat. no. WR 4; Athens, National Museum 1335 (after 350 BC): Kaltsas, *Sculpture*, p. 214: cat. no. 438 with fig.

from the human sphere, and an altar is often used to mark the border between both of them. This border can also be stressed by the figure of the wine pourer. In comparison to the dedicants, he is sometimes extremely large; on one example even the mixing vessel is towering above them.<sup>46</sup> This follows the rules of hierarchic scale in general, but it has a specific significance too. It demonstrates that the banquet is taking place in an exclusively heroic sphere, obviously distinct from the humans.

To sum up: the banqueting reliefs cannot be related iconographically to images of *theoxenia*. They do not focus on the ritual attempt to make the heroes present, but on their actual presence, visualized by the distinctive actions of the protagonists. Even if these images seem to be quite static to the modern viewer, they are usually full of transitory elements. Wine is flowing from the *rhyton* to the *phiale*, the heroine is burning incense and the wine pourer is very busy.

The heroes might have been so popular in classical Athens because they were conceived as being 'near' to the worshippers. The images do not stress this closeness, though; they create a marked distance instead. The hero, together with the heroine and the wine pourer, is in his own sphere, hardly ever taking notice of his worshippers. This seems to be a significant characteristic of the images: while there are some deities caring for their worshippers, or at least communicating with them, the banqueting heroes are represented as rather unapproachable. Perhaps this can be explained as an attempt to enhance their status, to bestow more dignity on them by pictorial means.

At least as far as the images are concerned, it does not seem as if in the late fifth and fourth century BC closeness between the human and the divine sphere would have been a central category for the worshippers in general; it is only one of the different ways, but of course a very impressive one, to articulate their encounter. Much more important was to show that the worshippers not only venerated images of gods and heroes, but met them *in personam*. The supernaturals are

46 Cf. e.g. Athens, National Museum 2426 (fourth century BC): J. N. Svoronos, *Das Athener Nationalmuseum III* (Athens: Beck and Barth, 1908–37), p. 641 no. 376 pl. 151, 2. Marseille, Musée d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne 1600 (c.350 BC): Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet*, p. 621: cat. no. R 467 fig. 688. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 1558 (c.350 BC): M. Moltesen, *Greece in the Classical Period* (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1995), pp. 135–6: cat. no. 70 with fig.; Comella, *I rilievi votivi greci*, p. 220: cat. no. Pireo 28. See also the fragment of a banquet relief, Athens, National Museum 122: Svoronos, *Das Athener Nationalmuseum III*, p. 680 no. 480, 8 pl. 253, 8; Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet*, p. 610: cat. no. R 355 fig. 598; van Straten, *Hiera kalá*, p. 317: cat. no. R 170. A tiny servant, belonging to the worshippers, stands beside the altar. The *kline* and the deities are excessively larger.

characterized as being actually present mainly by the reactions of the worshippers to their revelation or by their own actions. These actions can be gestures as well as, especially on the votives of the nymphs and the equestrian heroes, rapid movements, which stress the suddenness of their appearance. The votives do not illustrate *what* has really happened in the sanctuaries, but they try to stress *that* something happened. And in imaging the gods as if they were present, they demonstrate that the ritual communication was successful.

## NEW STATUES FOR OLD GODS

*Kenneth Lapatin*

According to the third-century AD Cilician poet and biographer of philosophers, Diogenes Laertius, Stilpo of Megara was run out of Athens in the late fourth century BC for insulting the city's patron goddess:

He used the following argument concerning Pheidias' Athena: 'Isn't Athena, the daughter of Zeus, a god?' And when the other said 'Yes' he went on, 'But she isn't Zeus', but Pheidias'. When the other agreed, he concluded, 'So she isn't a god.' And for this he was summoned before the Areopagos.

There, he attempted to defend himself, ingeniously arguing that Athena was no god, but rather a goddess – a female rather than a male. But the Areopagites would have none of it. All of which, Diogenes concludes, led the atheist Theodoros of Cyrene to remark sarcastically, 'How did Stilpo learn that? Did he lift her garment and contemplate her garden?' (*Life of Stilpo* 2.116)

Earlier versions of this chapter were presented at the First Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in Santiago de Compostela, September 1995; to participants in the Study Group on Religion and Myth in the Ancient World at Boston University, October 1996; and at the 'Images of God' Ancient History Seminar Series, University of Oxford, May 1998. I am grateful to the organizers and participants in these meetings for their hospitality and many stimulating comments, particularly to D. W. Bailey, Simon Price, Jeffery Henderson, Joanna S. Smith and Sarolta A. Takács, as well as Nanno Marinatos and Anne Stewart, who discussed the topic with me at an earlier stage. Thanks are also due to A. A. Donohue, Laure Marest-Caffey, Sarah Iles Johnston, Alik Moustaka, Danielle M. Newland, Brunilde Ridgway, Andrew Stewart and Marina Belozerskaya. I am especially grateful to Jan Bremmer and Andrew Erskine for inviting me to participate in the Edinburgh conference and to publish this chapter here, and for their suggestions for its improvement. None of the above, of course, is responsible for any errors that remain.

The garment of Pheidias' *Athena* was made of gold, over a ton of it,<sup>1</sup> but this last insult, apparently, did not concern the Areopagites. At issue, despite Stilpo's attempted diversion through grammatical analysis, was the relation of the image to the imaged, and Stilpo's affront to the former had to be punished to restore honour to the latter. (Theodoros, in contrast, apparently escaped with impunity.)

Some of the implications of this episode have been explored by Andrew Stewart.<sup>2</sup> Against a traditional, but increasingly unpopular view, he argued, rightly in my opinion, that Pheidias' monumental gold-and-ivory statue of the goddess did not cease to be venerated at Athens after the independent radical democracy that had commissioned it under the leadership of Perikles in the middle of the fifth century BC had been overthrown and replaced by oligarchical rule at the end of the Peloponnesian War and various other governmental systems thereafter. There is plenty more evidence to support this position, not least the appearance of representations (a term I prefer to 'copies', except in the case of a full-scale replica in Nashville, Fig. 7.1) of the statue on official Athenian state document reliefs in the late fifth and fourth centuries BC, on New Style tetradrachmai in the second and the first centuries BC, and above all, on the two hundred or so other objects that feature Pheidias' *Athena*, from terracotta tokens to gold buttons to brooches to votive plaques, mosaics and stone altars, as well as the better-known statuettes. These date from the late fifth century BC onward and have been found not only in Athens, but throughout the Mediterranean world, and beyond.<sup>3</sup>

Today, Pheidias' famous gold-and-ivory statue, which stood in the principal chamber of the temple on the Acropolis we call the Parthenon, is commonly called the *Parthenos*. Yet exceedingly few of the numerous ancient authors who mention the statue use this term. Among the earliest is the comic poet Philippides, at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century BC, complaining of the

1 K. D. S. Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 64–5.

2 A. Stewart, 'Nuggets: mining the texts again', *AJA* 102 (1998), pp. 271–3. Cf. C. J. Herington, *Athena Parthenos and Athena Polias: A Study in the Religion of Periclean Athens* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1955).

3 See the still useful compendium of N. Leipen, *Athena Parthenos: A Reconstruction* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1971). See too K. D. S. Lapatin, 'The ancient reception of Pheidias' *Athena Parthenos*: the physical evidence in context', in L. Hardwick and S. Ireland (eds), *The January Conference 1996: The Reception of Classical Texts and Images* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1996), pp. 1–20; Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pls. 154–65; and G. Nick, *Die Athena Parthenos: Studien zum griechischen Kultbild und seiner Rezeption* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2002).



*Figure 7.1* Modern full-size replica of Pheidias' chryselephantine *Athena*, in the Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee, made by sculptor Alan LeQuire of gypsum cement reinforced with chopped fibreglass mounted on a steel frame, subsequently gilded and painted.

desecration of the temple by Demetrios Poliorketes, who 'even introduced his courtesans to the Parthenos' (frag. 25.3 K–A *apud* Plutarch, *Demetrios* 26.5). But here the ambiguity between image and imaged, statue and goddess, remains. (Indeed, such blurring was as old as



Homer: in *Iliad* 6, Hecuba and the Trojan women bring precious garments before the statue of Athena so that their city might be spared, but the goddess herself lifts her head in a gesture of denial still used in Greece today, often to the confusion of tourists.) So far as I am aware, the term *Parthenos* is applied unambiguously to Pheidias' statue only four times in surviving ancient literature: by Himerios in the fourth century AD, by a scholiast to Demosthenes, and twice by Pausanias, who does so with reservations, both times referring to the statue as the 'so-called Parthenos' (*hê kaloumenê*) (5.11.10, 10.34.8); on other occasions the late second-century periegete, who provides us with more information regarding the detailed appearance of the image than any other source, merely calls it 'the statue' (*to agalma*) or 'the statue of Athena' (*to agalma tês Athênas, tês Athênas to agalma*) (1.24.5, 1.24.7, 1.25.7). Diogenes Laertius, or his source, as we have seen, called it 'Pheidias' Athena'. In the fifth century BC Thucydides (and perhaps Perikles himself?) called it 'the statue' (*to agalma*), and fourth-century Athenian orators and temple inventories inscribed on stone also referred to the image as 'the golden statue', 'the golden statue in the Hekatompenon', 'the statue of Athena', 'the golden statue of Athena' or simply 'the Athena'. Later authors also called it 'the ivory Athena' and the 'gold-and-ivory Athena'.<sup>4</sup>

There is also a joke in Aristophanes' *Birds* (lines 667–70), produced in 414 BC, that would make little sense if the audience did not recognize Pheidias' statue as a Parthenos, but the Athenians used many epithets to describe their goddess.<sup>5</sup> Characters in Aristophanes, for example, also call her *archêgetês* ('leader'), *glaukôpis* ('owl-eyed'), *despoina* ('lady'), *korê* ('maiden'), *potnia Pallas* ('Queen Pallas'), *kleidouchos* ('key-holding'), *mêdeousa* ('ruling'), *pankratês* ('all-powerful'), *obrimopatra* ('daughter of a mighty father'), *tritogeneia* ('Trito-born'), *phalaritis* ('cheek-pieces wearing'), *philochoros* ('homeland-loving'), *poliouchos* ('city-guarding'), *pulaimachos* ('fighter at the gate'), *phobesistrate* ('frightener of hosts'), *chrysolonchos* ('golden-speared'), *gorgolopha* ('gorgon-crested') and *chrysolopha* ('golden-crested', which, I think, is a pun, referring to Pheidias' chryselephantine statue); and the goddess is also called *polias* ('guardian of the city').

This last epithet, of course, is today widely associated with the ancient olive-wood statue that shared the Acropolis with the so-called *Parthenos* and many other images of the goddess. Like Pheidias' *Athena*, the wooden statue is today usually referred to by an epithet (*polias*) far less often employed in antiquity, when it was frequently just called 'the

4 Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 63–4 with full references.

5 For epithets see also Graf, this volume, Chapter 3.

statue' or the like. Ancient authors used a number of terms for it and other statues: *agalma*, *hedos*, *eidolon*, *xoanon*, *bretas* and *xulinon*.<sup>6</sup> The image is often distinguished as the *old* statue, the *olive-wood* statue, and, of course, like Pheidias' statue, is also frequently just called 'the goddess'.<sup>7</sup> It was eventually installed in the late fifth-century BC building on the north side of the Acropolis that we call the 'Erechtheion', but Athenian inscriptions of the fifth and fourth centuries call 'the temple', 'the old temple' or even 'the temple on the Acropolis in which is the old image'. Only later does it come to be called 'the temple of *Athena Polias*'.<sup>8</sup> None of this is new, but there is a point to such nit-picking, for the terms we use will shape our view of the material.<sup>9</sup> And although we can never hope to recover completely ancient conceptions, we must be careful to avoid merely imposing our own.

Diverse accounts are given of the old statue of Athena (the so-called *Polias*). It was, according to various ancient authors, considered to be one of the most ancient and holy images of the Greek gods; to have fallen from heaven (Pausanias 1.26.6); to have been set up by Erichthonios (Apollodorus 3.14.6); to have been a rude log refurbished by the sculptor Endoios (Athenagoras, *Leg. Pro Christ.* 17.3; *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1421–4a). When the Athenians evacuated their city in 480 BC, they apparently took this image with them. Years later, as an omen to Mark Antony, it reputedly turned from East to West and spat blood (Dio Cassius 54.7.1–4). More regularly, it may have been taken down to Phaleron annually to be washed as part of the Plynteria and

6 For the ancient vocabulary of statues of Athena see the following note. For statues in general see e.g. P. Linant de Bellefonds et al., 'Rites et activités relatifs aux images de culte', *ThesCRA* II, pp. 417–507; T. S. Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild: Untersuchungen zur Funktion griechischer Kultbilder in Religion und Politik* (Munich: Beck, 2000); S. Saïd, 'Deux noms de l'image en grec ancien: idole et icône', *CRAI* (1987), pp. 309–30; K. Koonce, 'Ἀγάλμα and εἰκών', *AJPh* 109 (1988), pp. 108–10; A. A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); A. Hermay, 'Les noms de la statue chez Hérodote', in M.-C. Amouretti and P. Villard (eds), *Eukrata: mélanges offerts à Claude Vatin* (Aix-en-Provence: Université Claude Vatin, 1994), pp. 21–9; M. Dickie, 'What is a Kolossos and how were Kolossoi made in the Hellenistic period?', *GRBS* 37 (1996), pp. 237–57; L. Robert, *Opera Minora Selecta: épigraphie et antiquités grecques*, 7 vols. (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1968–90), 2: 832–40.

7 B. S. Ridgway, 'Images of Athena on the Akropolis', in J. Neils (ed.), *Goddess and Polis: The Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 120–7; J. Mansfield, 'The robe of Athena and the Panathenaic "peplos"', PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1985, pp. 135–97; I. B. Romano, 'Early Greek cult images', PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1980, pp. 42–57.

8 D. Harris, *Treasures of the Parthenon and Erechtheion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 201–2; and Mansfield, 'Robe of Athena', pp. 198–252.

9 See e.g. J. Bremmer, 'Iconoclast, iconoclastic, and iconoclasm: notes towards a genealogy', *Church History and Religious Culture* 88 (2008), pp. 1–17.

Kallynteria festivals. And every year at the Panathenaia it was given a new peplos. Although some scholars have suggested that it was the model for the familiar image of Athena on Panathenaic prize amphorai, fourth-century BC Athenian temple inventories record that it was adorned with a diadem or wreath, earrings, neckband and necklaces, a golden owl, aegis and gorgoneion, and held a phiale,<sup>10</sup> and thus has also been identified on third-century BC coins.<sup>11</sup> Of course, each of the ancient sources that provide this information has an agenda that was far from art historical. There is no doubt of the venerability of the old statue, but unlike the so-called *Parthenos*, we really don't know what it looked like.

None the less, the old olive-wood statue of Athena is a prime example of what modern handbooks and specialist literature treating ancient art, as well as religion, call a 'cult statue'. While a commonplace, this expression is rarely defined, and there is a tendency, I think, for each of us to feel that, as the American Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart remarked apropos of pornography, 'I know it when I see it.' But cult statues, like pornography, are exceedingly difficult to pin down, and this is not just because we are, by and large, unable to see them.

In her 1980 doctoral dissertation, 'Early Greek cult images', Irene Romano defined a cult statue as 'a sculptural image of a divinity which served as the major representation and as the focus of worship of that divinity at a particular shrine or sanctuary', but she very quickly notes that

cult images were not always clearly distinguishable from other sculptural representations of gods or goddesses [and that they] mostly looked very much the way that other divine representations looked with the possible exception of the attributes in their hands and special head apparel. What does distinguish cult images from other representations of deities is their special setting and their primary role in cult activities. Cult images were commonly given the honor of a grand home in a temple or of some other special setting . . . And, more importantly, cult statues were assigned a primary role as the substitute for the deity at cult functions, such as sacrifices and processions. A cult image was considered a most sacred object, one which not only belonged specifically to the deity but one which was also identified closely with the deity.<sup>12</sup>

10 Harris, *Treasures*, p. 204.

11 J. H. Kroll, 'The ancient image of Athena Polias', *Hesperia*, Suppl. 20 (1982), pp. 65–76; see also Mansfield, 'Robe of Athena', pp. 135–97.

12 Romano, 'Cult images', p. 2.

By this definition, both of the statues on the Athenian Acropolis, the so-called *Parthenos* and *Polias*, are 'cult statues', but for many years scholars have argued whether Pheidias' *Athena*, and similar figures, like the monumental gold-and-ivory *Zeus* he produced subsequently at Olympia, were 'true' cult statues, like the old statue of *Athena*. For no altar or priesthood is specifically associated with the Pheidian statue on the Acropolis, and Athenian inscriptions that name the recipients of sacrifices list *Athena Polias* (as well as an *Athena Nike* and *Athena Hygeia*), but not *Athena Parthenos*. Thus some scholars have maintained that Pheidias' *Athena* had no cult, and therefore could not be a 'cult statue'. On the other hand, among the items listed in inscribed Athenian inventories as being inside the Parthenon is a table, presumably for offerings, suggesting the statue seems to have been associated with a cult of some sort.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it would certainly be odd if some sort of adaptation were not made to Athenian ritual practice to accommodate the monumental new statue commissioned by the Athenian *demos* at vast expense.

The problem here, however – and one much larger than the strict application of the epithets *Parthenos* and *Polias* to the Acropolis statues, but of a piece with it – is the attempt to understand ancient beliefs and behaviour in terms of modern distinctions. The artificiality of the category 'cult statue' is perhaps nowhere more evident, though inadvertently so, than in Walter Burkert's 1988 essay, 'The meaning and function of the temple in classical Greece', where the author takes pains to provide ancient Greek terms for all of the concepts, objects and religious acts he described: sacrifice, prayer, the dedication of offerings, etc. For Burkert *xoanon*, *bretas* and *hedos* all denote 'cult statue', but he, like Romano, has to concede that these terms are also applied to other images, and he eventually must admit *aporia*, concluding that 'the distinction between cult image and votive image seemed to be unclear and not even very essential'.<sup>14</sup>

13 *IG* II/III<sup>2</sup> 1413 lines 14–15; 1425, lines 134–5, Addenda p. 805; *SEG* 15 (1958) 120, line 6, see Mansfield, 'Robe of Athena', p. 232 n. 19; Harris, *Treasures*, pp. 110–11. In late antiquity the *Athena Parthenos*, or rather its replacement, appears to have been the principal object of worship on the Acropolis; Mansfield, 'Robe of Athena', p. 203. See also S. B. Aleshire, *The Athenian Asklepieion: The People, their Dedications, and the Inventories* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1989), *passim*, with extensive bibliography at p. 308; D. H. Gill, 'Trapezomata: a neglected aspect of Greek sacrifice', *HThR* 67 (1974), pp. 17–37; S. Dow and D. H. Gill, 'The Greek cult table', *AJA* 69 (1965), pp. 103–14.

14 W. Burkert, 'The meaning and function of the temple in classical Greece', in M. V. Fox (ed.), *Temple in Society* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1988), pp. 27–47 at 31–2, 43. See too P. E. Corbett, 'Greek temples and Greek worshippers: the literary and archaeological evidence', *BICS* 17 (1970), pp. 149–58, for some of the circumstances in which the interiors of temples were visible. For the roles

Indeed, Alice Donohue has argued convincingly that the very concept of the 'cult' image is a false one, having no basis in the ancient Greek vocabulary, thought or practice.<sup>15</sup> The modern emergence of this idea, Donohue suggests, is explained by the influence of ancient antiquarian and early Christian iconoclastic texts, and the importance in modern classical scholarship of issues of idolatry and representation. Late antique authors deliberately conflated the Greek tradition of image-making with Near Eastern religious practices, in which statues, having been enlivened by specific rituals (for which we have no evidence in Greece), were thought to house the spirit of the deity, and therefore became the focus of worship, hence the idea of the 'Kultbild'. That the Greek reception of statues like the so-called *Polias* and *Parthenos* was considerably more subtle is made clear by the Stilpo and other episodes recorded by ancient authors. Most of these, however, are late, dating to the second and third centuries AD, but Plato, writing soon after the erection of Pheidias' *Athena*, remarked in *Laws* (931a):

some of the gods whom we honour we see clearly, but of others we set up statues (*agalmata*) as images (*eikonas*), believing that when we honour these, lifeless though they be, the living gods feel great good-will and gratitude towards us.

Here Plato clearly distinguishes between the image and the imaged (as, incidentally, did Orestes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (446) when he says to Athena that he falls at the feet of her image (*bretas*), and as did Admetos in Euripides' *Alkestis* (348 ff.), when he complains that he can embrace a statue, the form of his wife fashioned by craftsmen's hands, but not her). Plato states explicitly that the statues are lifeless (*apsychoi*), but their veneration none the less brings joy to the living (*empsychous*) gods.

A fragmentary fourth-century BC red-figure krater today in Amsterdam depicts Apollo, inscribed to the right with his lyre, along with Artemis, Dionysos and maenads, outside his temple in which stands his statue, rendered in added white, armed with bow and phiale

of 'artworks' in structuring identity see e.g. B. Fehr, 'The Greek temple in the early archaic period: meaning, use and social context', *Hephaistos* 14 (1996), pp. 165–91; and, for a later period, K. W. Arafat, *Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

- 15 A. A. Donohue, 'The Greek images of the gods: considerations on terminology and methodology', *Hephaistos* 15 (1997), pp. 31–45. Cf. B. S. Ridgway, '"Periklean" cult images and their media', in J. M. Barringer and J. M. Hurwit (eds), *Periklean Athens and its Legacy: Problems and Perspectives* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), pp. 111–18.



Figure 7.2 Fragment of a calyx krater from Taranto, first quarter of the fourth century BC, depicting Apollo seated playing a lyre outside of a temple containing a statue of him standing holding a bow and a phiale.

(Fig. 7.2).<sup>16</sup> Nigel Spivey has suggested that this fragment might merely show the god twice, inasmuch as Olympians might almost be ubiquitous, travelling as they do at the speed of light, but this notion is belied by another well-known vase, an Apulian krater now in New York, that clearly separates an immortal, in this case a slightly bemused Herakles, from his image, which is here receiving the finishing touches at the hand of a painter (Fig. 7.3).<sup>17</sup> Another vase where the distinction between statue and god is clear is a Lucanian bell krater of c.420 BC attributed to the Pisticci Painter that depicts a kouros-like statue of Apollo standing on a pedestal, wearing a wreath, and holding a laurel staff and a bow. Two large snakes are wrapped around the statue, at whose feet is a dismembered boy. A woman wielding an axe and a man raising his hand to his head in dismay face the statue. These seem to be Laokoon and his wife. Behind them, looking on, is Apollo himself, also with wreath, staff and bow, but depicted in contemporary, rather than archaic style. A similar scene appears on a fragmentary vase of

16 Allard Pierson Museum, APM02579: C. C. Mattusch, *Classical Bronzes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pl. 2; W. Oenbrink, *Das Bild im Bilde* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1997), p. 446, pl. 34, D7; J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999<sup>2</sup>), p. 28.

17 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 50.11.4: Bellefonds et al., p. 424, no. 40, pl. 99; Oenbrink, *Das Bild im Bilde*, p. 456, pl. 44, G3.



*Figure 7.3* Apulian column krater attributed to the Group of Boston 00.348, c.350 BC, depicting an artist painting a statue of Herakles; his African assistant (lower left) prepares pigments at a brazier, while Zeus (above) and Nike and Herakles himself (far right) look on.

about half a century later attributed to the Iliupersis Painter, now in Ruvo.<sup>18</sup> The relation between images and imaged is certainly one of

18 Basel, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig Inv. Lu 70: E. Berger and R. Lullies (eds), *Antike Kunstwerke aus der Sammlung Ludwig. I: Frühe Tonsarkophage und*

concern to the Greeks, but there is no easy agreement among them.<sup>19</sup> The joy that statues might bring to the gods is the reason why the men of Orneai were able to satisfy Apollo by dedicating bronzes of sacrificial animals at Delphi, rather than the living ones they had unwisely promised to offer him daily (Pausanias 10.18.5), and why the Areopagos punished Stilpo. The image serves to convey the essence of the imaged. The gods, living, but invisible, feel good will and gratitude (*eunoia* and *charis*) to those who honour their present statues. I will return to some of the means by which statues were thought to please the gods, but first, it is important to note one of the chief purposes of the statues themselves. As Jean-Pierre Vernant has observed, they exist ‘to make the invisible visible, to assign a place in our world to entities from the other world . . . the[ir] aim is to establish a true communication, an authentic contact with [the sacred power]’.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, possession of the image consecrates a bond that unites the possessor, whether individual or state, with the divinity.<sup>21</sup>

Vernant, like many others, is well aware that the statue ‘does not represent the god abstractly and conceived in and for itself’, but rather ‘expresses divine power insofar as it is handled and used by certain individuals as an instrument of social prestige’.<sup>22</sup> And if prestige is gained and joy brought to the gods by the act of worshipping – or perhaps better, ‘honouring’ – statues, how much more so by commissioning and dedicating them. Greek religion, indeed Greek culture, at its core, was something of a mercenary – or, if you prefer a more polite term, a reciprocal – affair.<sup>23</sup> At the very opening of the *Iliad*, when

(footnote 18 *continued*)

*Vasen* (Basel: Archäologischer Verlag 1979), pp. 182–5, 239–48; A. D. Trendall, *Red Figure Vases of South Italy and Sicily* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1989), p. 19, fig. 8; Oenbrink, *Das Bild im Bilde*, p. 386, no. D13, pl. 35b; P. Blome, *Basel Museum of Ancient Art and Ludwig Collection* (Zurich and Geneva: Swiss Institute for Art Research/Paribas, 1999), pp. 64–5, fig. 180; J. Latacz et al., *Homer: Der Mythos von Troia in Dichtung und Kunst* (Munich: Hirmer, 2008), p. 396, no. 141; Bellefonds et al., p. 506, no. 768, pl. 117. For the Ruvo fragments, now apparently lost, see Bellefonds et al., p. 506, no. 768; Oenbrink, *Das Bild im Bilde*, p. 385, no. D8, pl. 35a. See also bell krater on the New York market attributed to the Hippolytos Painter (Oenbrink, *Das Bild im Bilde*, p. 382, C9, pl. 440b) that likewise depicts the goddess Artemis, with stag and spears, looking towards a small statue of herself, with bow and arrows, standing atop a pillar.

19 Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild*, pp. 35–43.

20 J.-P. Vernant, ‘From the “presentification” of the invisible to the imitation of appearance’, in J.-P. Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 153.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

23 See also R. Parker, ‘Pleasing thighs: reciprocity in Greek religion’, in C. Gill et al. (eds), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 105–26.



Apollo's priest Chryses requires the god's help to obtain the return of his daughter, whom Agamemnon carried off, he reminds Apollo of the bulls and goats he had sacrificed and temples he had roofed. And then there is the well-known seventh-century BC bronze offering to the same god, perhaps a tripod attachment, now in Boston, whose boustrophedon inscription reads, 'Mantiklos dedicated me to the far-shooter of the silver bow as a tithe; do you, O Phoibos, give something pleasing in return.'<sup>24</sup> In both cases we see offerings to the gods, *anathemata*, as means of negotiation. They are not simply gifts or tokens of exchange, but charged ritual objects, and in the case of images of the gods, and perhaps even mortals, as opposed to gold bowls or new temples, there is also an additional dynamic element, the potential for interpenetration of image and imaged when the image asserts the presence of its prototype, when the image, in short, is epiphanic. I will return to this notion shortly.

Today, in the wake of Christ, we tend to associate piety with humility. To be sure, a few ancient authors (prior to the late antique iconoclasts) did complain about ostentatious images, but their views do not seem to have been widespread. Expense and impressiveness have always been closely linked, and in antiquity, unlike today, these, rather than meekness and poverty, were thought to increase spiritual content: the more numerous or splendid one's offerings to the gods, the more one might expect in return from them. And, as Aristotle noted in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (4.2), the more credit one would gain in the eyes of others, mortals as well as divinities, peers as well as foes. Competition, present in so many aspects of Greek society, was certainly not absent when it came to erecting statues: the most obvious examples, perhaps, are the splendid korai on the Athenian Acropolis.<sup>25</sup>

Such competitive emulation, alternatively called 'peer polity interaction', to use the popular jargon, was practised by states as well as individuals: in the sixth century BC, Greek poleis constructed monumental stone temples and filled them with precious offerings, among them chryselephantine statues, up to life-size.<sup>26</sup> This is not the time to

24 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 3.997: J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Archaic Period* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 30, fig. 10; A. P. Kozloff and D. Mitten (eds), *The Gods Delight: The Human Figure in Classical Bronze* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1988), pp. 52–7, no. 2; A. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), fig. 11; N. Papalexandrou, *The Visual Poetics of Power: Warriors, Youths, and Tripods in Early Greece* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 84–6, figs. 31–2.

25 G. M. A. Richter, *Korai: Archaic Greek Maidens* (London: Phaidon, 1968); K. Karakasi, *Archaic Korai* (Los Angeles: Getty Museum Press, 2003), pp. 115–41.

26 C. Renfrew and J. F. Cherry (eds), *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).



Figure 7.4 Chryselephantine “Apollo” from the Halos Deposit, Delphi, mid-sixth century BC. Delphi Museum.

rehearse the history and development of the chryselephantine technique. Suffice to say that there is ample literary and material evidence for gold-and-ivory statues before Pheidias.<sup>27</sup> Best known today are the badly burnt and much restored cache of statues from Delphi (Fig. 7.4), which were probably housed in a treasury rather than Apollo’s temple.<sup>28</sup> One might also cite an enigmatic ivory object mentioned in an archaic inscription recording the outfitting of the Aphaia sanctuary at Aigina, or an ivory ear from the Dionysos temple at Iria on Naxos.<sup>29</sup> Among the many lost chryselephantine statues mentioned

27 See Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 22–60.

28 P. Amandry, ‘Rapport préliminaire sur les statues chryséléphantines de Delphes’, *BCH* 63 (1939), pp. 86–119; and ‘Les fosses de l’Aire’, in *Guide de Delphes: Le musée* (Paris: Ecole française d’Athènes, Sites et monuments 6, 1991), pp. 191–226. See also Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 72, 118, pl. 173; Boardman, *Archaic Greek Sculpture*, fig. 127; C. C. Mattusch, *Greek Bronze Statuary* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 177–9; C. Rolley, *La sculpture grecque I* (Paris: Picard, 1994), pp. 75–6, 268, figs. 5, 275. Colour photographs can be found in B. Petrakos, *Delphi* (Athens: Kleio, 1977), figs. 20, 21, 26, 27, 30, 33.

29 Aegina Museum 2412, *IG IV*, 1580: see Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 55–6; Naxos Museum 8718: Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, p. 148, no. 35, pl. 146.

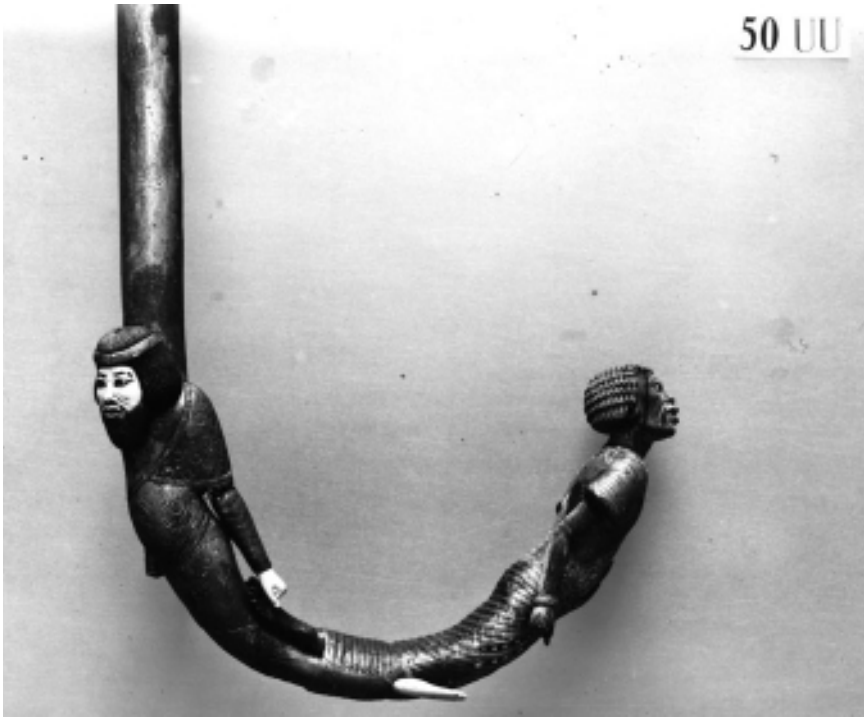


Figure 7.5 Handle of a walking stick from the tomb of Tutankhamun, c. 1350 BC, depicting a Syrian with face, hands and feet of ivory and an African with face, hands and feet of ebony. The bodies of both are of painted and gilded wood.

by Pausanias is an *Athena* he saw at Aigeira: ‘the face and the hands are of ivory and also the feet, the rest is of wood, decorated, for the most part, with gold and colours’ (7.26.4); and another at Megara: ‘the statue is gilded, except for the hands and the feet; these and the face are of ivory’ (1.42.4). These images are lost, but the handle of a walking stick from the tomb of Tutankhamun (Fig. 7.5) provides an impression of their technique, if not their style.<sup>30</sup>

Ancient inscriptions chronicle the high prices ivory commanded as a raw material, and finished ivory products appear repeatedly among precious objects recorded in temple inventories.<sup>31</sup> In a society where

30 Cairo Museum no. 50uu = JE 61732: J. B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), no. 43; H. Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen I* (New York: Cooper Square, 1963), pl. 70; R. Meiggs, *Trees and Timber in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pl. 5b; M. Saleh and H. Sourouzian, *Die Hauptwerke im ägyptischen Museum Kairo* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1986), no. 187.

31 Prices are collected in Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*; for a brief survey see A. Oliver, ‘Ivory temple doors’, in J. L. Fitton (ed.), *Ivory in Greece and the*

reciprocity of obligations underlay the relations between gods and men,<sup>32</sup> spiritual and monetary values were closely linked. In the second century AD, Maximus of Tyre recognized that 'the Greek manner of honouring the gods uses what is most beautiful on earth, in purity of raw materials, in human shape and in artistic precision' (*Oration* 2.3). The Elder Pliny (*Natural History* 8.31) and Pausanias (5.12.2), moreover, state that the expense and rarity of ivory made it appropriate for statues of deities; but along with gold – bright-gleaming and incorruptible: 'the child of Zeus' according to Pindar (frag. 209 Maehler) – it not only pleased the gods, but also effectively conveyed divine nature to mortal eyes: for ivory is the whitest and hardest organic material known; finer than the finest of woods, it is able to hold exquisite carved detail; its warm, glowing surface was thought to resemble the most beautiful flesh, as in the *Odyssey* (18.190–6), where Athena makes Penelope's skin 'whiter than new-sawn ivory'. And, like gold, ivory was also considered to have magical qualities: recall the myths of Pelops and Pygmalion.<sup>33</sup> Artemidorus of Daldis, moreover, wrote in the second century AD of the importance of the materials of statues when they appeared in dreams (*Oneirocritica* 2.39): 'Statues that are fashioned from a substance that is hard and incorruptible as, for example, those that are made of gold, silver, bronze, ivory, stone,

(footnote 31 continued)

*Eastern Mediterranean from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Period*, British Museum Occasional Paper no. 85 (London: British Museum, 1992), pp. 227–32. A range of ivory objects, including ivory shavings, stored on the Athenian Acropolis is presented by Harris, *Treasures, passim*. See also *IDélos* 298A, 181.

32 See e.g. J. Gould, *Myth, Ritual Memory, and Exchange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 203–34 ('Making sense of Greek religion', 1985<sup>1</sup>).

33 Other Homeric passages in which ivory figures, including the famous simile at *Iliad* 4.141–5 where Menelaos' wounded thigh is likened to stained ivory, are collected and analysed by J. B. Carter, *Greek Ivory-Carving in the Orientalizing and Archaic Periods* (New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 7–21; see also H. L. Lorimer, 'Gold and ivory in Greek mythology', in *Greek Poetry and Life: Essays Presented to Gilbert Murray on his 70th Birthday* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 14–33. For ivory as a luxury in the Bible see e.g. 1 Kings 9.26–8; 10.11, 18–20, 22; 2 Chron. 8.17–18; 9.10, 21; Amos 3.15; 6.4–6; Ps. 45.8; for Pelops, whose shoulder, eaten by Demeter, was replaced by the gods in ivory, see Pindar, *Ol.* 1. The ivory shoulder is mentioned explicitly by several authors, e.g. Virgil, *Georg.* 3.8; Hyginus, *Fab.* 83; Ovid, *Met.* 6.404–11; Lucian, *de Saltatione* 54; Servius, *on Aen.* 6.603; Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron* 156. It was said by Pliny the Elder to have been visible at Elis (*Natural History* 28.34), but Pausanias (1.13.6) notes that it had, by his day, disappeared. The *locus classicus* for Pygmalion is Ovid, *Met.* 10. 243–97; see also A. Caubet, 'Pygmalion et la statue d'ivoire', in R. Étienne et al. (eds), *Architecture et poésie dans le monde grec: hommage à Georges Roux* (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient, 1989), pp. 247–54. See also R. L. Gordon, 'The real and the imaginary: production and religion in the Graeco-Roman world', *Art History* 2 (1979), pp. 5–34 at 13, reprinted in his *Image and Value in the Graeco-Roman World* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), ch. I; Donohue, 'Images of gods'.

amber, or ebony, are auspicious. Statues made from any other material . . . are less auspicious and often even inauspicious.<sup>34</sup>

Ancient literary sources mention numerous early ivory images, as well as the more famous wooden ones. Vernant and other scholars, however, have posited a contrast between primitive, early images of Greek gods that make present the invisible deity, and developed anthropomorphic statues 'conceived as an imitative artifice reproducing in the form of a counterfeit the external appearance of real things',<sup>35</sup> a distinction between a religious image and a work of art. The picture, however, is not so neat, although it is one that is to some degree supported by the modes of discourse employed by late antique and early Christian sources. The precise appearance of the old statue of Athena and other allegedly primitive statues can only be imagined, but classical literature, beginning with Homer, provides us with a clear picture of how the Greeks conceived their gods: created in human form, the Olympians were possessed of conspicuous physical beauty; their bodies were perfect, without blemishes; their stature was greater than that of mere mortals; their fragrance ambrosial. The gods are consistently described as bright, shining, luminous. Though they may disguise themselves and appear on earth in some other form,<sup>36</sup> their radiance, more often than not, eventually reveals their true nature.<sup>37</sup> In the half-light of a temple or treasury building, the ivory flesh of even the earliest chryselephantine figures, originally smooth and luminous, represented the ethereal complexion of the gods; the refulgent gold of their hair and drapery consummated the awe-inspiring epiphany visible to those who had purified themselves with ritual ablutions, made preliminary sacrifices, and entered the sacred space of the sanctuary, whether as participants in festival processions or private supplicants.<sup>38</sup>

Vernant has, however, perceptively observed how the perfect bodies of the Greek gods, anthropomorphic though they may be, effectively

34 Trans. J. Elsner, 'Image and ritual: reflections on the religious appreciation of classical art', *CQ* 46.2 (1996), p. 516 n. 9; reprinted with revisions as 'Image and ritual: Pausanias and the sacred culture of Greek art', in J. Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 29–48, trans. at p. 30 n. 9. See also S. I. Johnston, 'Animating statues: a case in ritual theory', *Arethusa* 41 (2008), pp. 445–77, for a discussion of the importance of the materials of statues as theurgic *symbola* 'of a given ontological chain and the god of the chain him or herself, reweav[ing] the sympathetic bonds by which the cosmos was once created and by which it continues to be held together'.

35 Vernant, 'Presentification', p. 152.

36 See Buxton, this volume, Chapter 4.

37 See Donohue, 'Images of gods'; Elsner, 'Image and ritual'.

38 See Corbett, 'Greek temples and Greek worshippers'.

functioned to disassociate divinities from mortals through the effects of contrast, opposition, incompatibility and mutual exclusion. Though like us, they are what we can never be; and it is in our best moments, when we are young, healthy and beautiful, that we approach them most closely; thus Achilles and other Homeric heroes could be called 'god-like'. Surely the exotic materials of chryselephantine statues functioned in a similar distancing manner, whatever their style, even before Pheidias. The beauty, *charis*, that was an attribute of the gods was made visible through the intrinsic qualities of gold and ivory. The fact that statues became stylistically more realistic in no way diminished their effectiveness in representing the divine, to judge from the majority of ancient authors. Indeed, a principal characteristic of successful images of the divine in the archaic and classical periods seems to have been their ability to elicit wonder from, or to be recognized as wonders (*thaumata*) by, their viewers by means of skilful craftsmanship that made them appear radiant, faster or more overwhelming than other objects/beings.<sup>39</sup> Although Porphyry and other antiquarians might have thought that archaic images were 'more divine than statues carved with greater skill' (*De abstinencia* 2.18), the conservative Plato has Socrates remark that 'Daidalos would look a fool if he were to be born now and produce the kind of works that gave him his reputation' (*Hippias Major* 282a). If anything, in the hands of Pheidias and his followers, stylistic advances enhanced the desired effect of simulated epiphany, making present the invisible, revealing the true nature of the gods. Thus Pheidias came to be credited with journeying to Olympos and seeing Zeus with his mind's eye before he made his statue at Olympia, which was considered to have added something to traditional religion (Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 12.10.9). What Pheidias accomplished was to make physical the Homeric idea of the gods, and thereafter the old images, although by no means obsolete, were no longer entirely adequate.

Pheidias' *Athena* was successful on various levels. In socio-political as well as religious terms, the vast expenditure necessary for its construction – the money, in fact, that it also served to display – communicated piety to the gods and terrestrial power to mortals. The statue's gold alone is variously reported to have weighed 40–50 talents. The Athenian historian Philochoros (*FGrH* 328 F 121) provides a more precise, and thus seemingly more accurate figure: 44 talents or some

39 R. Neer, 'Early classical sculpture and the aesthetics of wonder', in *Abstracts: American Philological Association 139th Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, January 3–6, 2008*, p. 67; Elsner, 'Image and ritual'; Ridgway, "'Periklean" cult images', p. 113.

1,137 kg. At late fifth-century rates that is the equivalent of 616 silver talents or 3,696,000 drachmai. (If we accept that one drachma a day was the average wage of a skilled craftsman or a soldier in the field, this was enough to maintain a workforce or army of 10,000 men for more than a year, non-stop.) At any rate, it is slightly more than the 600 silver talents that Athens' allies are reported to have paid in annual tribute.<sup>40</sup>

The statue, moreover, presented to Athenians and allies, friends and foes alike, a vision of the goddess, the divine power that supported the polis, hitherto unavailable anywhere but in the mind's eye. While the Aiginetans, the Athenians' great rival before the Peloponnesian War, had won the palm for valour at Salamis and created a monumental pseudo-chryselephantine statue to supplement their archaic ivory image of Aphaia in a new temple, the Athenians outdid them, not only in the size and sculptural decoration of the Parthenon, which is over four times larger than the new Aigina temple and more opulent than any mainland temple hitherto, but also in the use of gold and ivory for the *Parthenos*, which stood an astounding c. 12.75 m tall. The Athenian project thus far surpassed that at Aigina, but the two are parallel inasmuch as in both cases a small, old statue was *supplemented* by a monumental new one. At Athens, however, both the precious new image and the venerable ancient one eventually received their own new temples.<sup>41</sup>

The production of a chryselephantine statue on the scale of the *Parthenos* posed unprecedented technical challenges. Statues up to life-size might be rendered by assembling on a wooden core individual components carved whole from single tusks, such as the limbs recovered at Delphi and elsewhere. The massive flesh surfaces of the *Parthenos*, however, could not be sculpted from solitary tusks, except, perhaps, for fingers and toes: tusks are not that big. New processes of unscrolling, softening and moulding ivory were needed.<sup>42</sup> Pheidias' gold-and-ivory *Athena Parthenos* thus represents a technological revolution, but it falls into a competitive pattern long prevalent in ancient Greece. The *Parthenos*, however, raised the stakes.

Two late antique writers, Julius Paris and Januarius Nepotianus, epitomizers of Valerius Maximus, preserve a curious tradition that Pheidias desired to fashion the image of Athena of marble rather than ivory, as it would be cheaper and last longer (and no doubt also be considerably simpler to assemble), but the Athenian *demos* insisted,

40 Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 64–5.

41 Ibid., pp. 61–2.

42 Ibid., pp. 68–78.



Figure 7.6 Imperial coin of Elis depicting Pheidias' Zeus at Olympia.

ordering him to be quiet and make the statue of ivory. Scholars have, for the most part, ignored this story, and although it must, on some level, be related to the traditions of Pheidias' mistreatment at the hands of the *demos*, it may not be wholly apocryphal. For rather than the artist-genius insisting on carrying out his revolutionary and expensive design against the inclination of the *demos* – recall Brunelleschi and the Florentines – the sovereign *demos* here demands more from the artist than he is initially inclined to produce. Indeed, the prestige of the community was at stake. Pheidias, to his eternal fame, was able to develop new technologies and fulfil this commission: the *Athena Parthenos* represents, for the first time, the production of a chryselephantine figure on a colossal scale.

After Pheidias unveiled his *Athena*, the construction of monumental gold-and-ivory statues became a dominant mode of peaceful competition between states in the Greek world. If Athens had a monumental chryselephantine statue, everybody wanted one. Following the success of the *Athena Parthenos*, Pheidias was commissioned to produce what became his most famous work, the grandiose chryselephantine Zeus at Olympia. There, too, an older statue of the god is known to have stood in a nearby temple. The new statue surpassed it, and even the *Parthenos* at Athens, and came to be ranked among the Seven Wonders of the World. It, too, is lost, and known today only from workshop debris, ancient descriptions, and representations in other media (Fig. 7.6).<sup>43</sup> So great was the desire of the inhabitants of Elis, who controlled the Olympian sanctuary, to have a work to rival the Athenian statue that they not only sanctioned the renovation of the

43 See e.g. Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 79–86; C. Höcker and L. Schneider, *Phidias*, Rowohlts Monographien 505 (Hamburg: Rohwolt, 1993), pp. 83–98; W. Schiering, *Die Werkstatt des Pheidias in Olympia. II: Werkstattfunde* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991); A. Mallwitz and W. Schiering, *Die Werkstatt des Pheidias in Olympia I* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1964).



interior of their new temple, which had been completed only shortly before work on the Parthenon began, but also commissioned from Pheidias and his pupil Kolotes two other chryselephantine statues for their polis, an *Aphrodite* and an *Athena*.<sup>44</sup> We are best informed about the *Zeus*, and here too there is evidence for more than a merely secular function. Pausanias, in addition to providing a detailed description of the statue's subsidiary iconography, reported the presence of an altar *inside* the temple in the second century AD (5.14.4). We do not know when this feature was installed, but Pausanias lists this altar second in his account of the thirty-seven altars at Olympia arranged in the order (and thus, perhaps, importance) in which sacrifices were made. Once again, a new statue, apparently constructed as the result of emulation, none the less seems to have produced adjustments in ritual behaviour.

Other Greeks were not to be outshone. The Megarians, whose chryselephantine *Athena* seen by Pausanias has already been mentioned, commissioned an elaborate monumental gold-and-ivory *Zeus* of their own from a local sculptor, Theokosmos, whom Pheidias is said to have assisted. The Peloponnesian War precluded this statue's completion, but it remained visible inside its temple, half-built, for hundreds of years, and seems to be depicted on later coins (Fig. 7.7).<sup>45</sup> The Argives, too, commissioned a large-scale chryselephantine statue of their patron goddess, Hera, from the renowned sculptor Polykleitos; surviving literary and visual evidence reveals that the goddess was depicted very much as an iconographic counterpart to Pheidias' *Zeus* (Fig. 7.8).<sup>46</sup> This new statue, like the earlier pseudo-chryselephantine image at Aigina, shared the *naos* of a new temple with a venerable old figure; in fact, the oldest known image of the goddess, according to Pausanias (2.17.5), carved of wild pear-wood and originally dedicated at Tiryns by Peirasos, son of Argos. Clement of Alexandria (*Protreptikos* 4.41) also records the material of the older

44 On the renovation see W. Dörpfeld in E. Curtius and F. Adler (eds), *Olympia Die Ergebnisse der von dem deutschen Reich veranstalteten Ausgrabung . . . II: Die Baudenkmäler* (Berlin: Asher, 1892), pp. 11–16; and especially F. Forbath, 'Der Fußboden im Inneren des Zeus Temples und seine Veränderungen bei Aufstellung des gold-elfenbein-Bildes', in W. Dörpfeld, *Alt-Olympia* (Berlin: Mittler, 1935), pp. 226–47. For Pheidias' other Elian chryselephantine statues see Pausanias 6.25.1 and 6.26.3. Yet another classical chryselephantine statue in Elian territory, an *Asklepios* by Kolotes at the port of Kyllene, is recorded by Strabo 8.3.4, but this statue is likely to have been commissioned to meet the needs of a newly imported cult, though it certainly also reflected the aspirations of the Elians. For all these works see also Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 79–98.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 96.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 101–5.



Figure 7.7 Imperial coin of Megara depicting Theokosmos' Zeus Olympios.

statue, as well as the tradition that it was made by Argos himself. Whichever legendary figure produced it, this ancient wooden statue of the seated goddess, like the old olive-wood *Athena* at Athens, clearly retained its status. Although considerably smaller than Polykleitos' enthroned *Hera* (and yet another chryselephantine figure with which it shared the temple, a *Hebe* by Naukydes), it was displayed inside the new *naos* raised upon a column.

If the Argives had two chryselephantine statues, and the Elians three, the Athenians needed more. At Delos they installed seven chryselephantine statues in a new temple constructed in the late fifth century, next to an older temple containing the famous image of Tektaios and Angelion that held the Three Graces in one hand. The new statues are known only from archaeological and epigraphical evidence, such as surviving fragments of their bichrome base with cuttings for installation. Only Leto is named in the inscriptions; Apollo and Artemis too must have been present, but the identities of the other four remain moot.<sup>47</sup>

This, apparently, was not enough, and by the middle of the fourth century BC the Athenians erected in Athens a new temple to Dionysos alongside an older one in the theatre precinct on the south side of the

47 The seven statues on Delos, which supplemented the archaic statue of Apollo (on which see Romano, 'Cult images', pp. 162–88), are recorded only in inscriptions, e.g. *IDélos* 1409 Ba, II, lines 46–7; *IDélos* 103, line 51; 104, line 108. Blocks of the hemi-circular late fifth-century base on which these statues stood within the temple of the Seven (also called temple of the Athenians) are the only physical evidence that survives; see F. Courby, *Délos. XII: Les temples d'Apollon* (Paris: De Boccard, 1931); see also Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 105–9.



*Figure 7.8* Roman marble variant of Polykleitos' chryselephantine *Hera* at Argos, from Vasciano, Umbria. Preserved height 117.5 cm.



Figure 7.9 Athenian New Style tetradrachm minted by Diokles and Diodoros depicting Alkamenēs' *Dionysos*, mid-first century BC.

Acropolis. This housed a monumental chryselephantine statue that Pausanias attributed to Pheidias' pupil, Alkamenēs. Here too, despite the expensive and impressive nature of the image in the new temple, only the core of the base of which survives, the venerable wooden statue of Dionysos Eleuthereus continued to participate in the rituals surrounding the celebration of the City or Great Dionysia: it was carried in festival processions and present at the staging of Athenian tragedies and comedies. The costly new image, again modelled on Pheidias' *Zeus* to judge from representations on coins and reliefs, was none the less deemed necessary to the prestige of the god and polis (Fig. 7.9).<sup>48</sup>

48 Pausanias 1.20.3. See also Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 98–100. Yet another 'new' late fifth-century Athenian chryselephantine statue may be indicated by *IG I<sup>3</sup> 64A* (= *IG I<sup>2</sup> 88*), dated c.440–415 BC, which seems to record a competition for the design of an ivory object, apparently for the sanctuary of Athena Nike on the Athenian Acropolis. J. A. Bundgaard, *Parthenon and the Mycenaean City on the Heights* (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1976), p. 130 with n. 304, rejects the possibility that this object might have been a door and argues that it was to be an ivory temple statue. If so, this would fit the pattern outlined above, as an archaic temple statue of Athena Nike is known from literary evidence and is also mentioned later in this inscription. The inscription, however, is fragmentary and it is far from clear that a new statue is being commissioned; it may well record the refurbishment of the shrine *for* the old statue. Ivory ceilings, as well as doors, for which see Oliver, 'Ivory temple doors', are recorded at a number of shrines. Pausanias, moreover, mentions the archaic statue of Athena Nike outside the context of his description of the Acropolis; it is possible that he did not see this image. In any event, neither he nor any other ancient source refers explicitly to a chryselephantine statue of Athena Nike. See Romano, 'Cult images', pp. 58–69; Donohue, *Xoana*, pp. 54–7; and I. S. Mark, *The Sanctuary of Athena Nike in*

There are yet other examples of new chryselephantine statues for old gods: at Patras, Pausanias saw a gold-and-ivory statue of Artemis that the emperor Augustus had transferred there from Kalydon following the Battle of Actium. This figure, which depicted the goddess as a huntress, was said to be the joint work of the Naupaktian sculptors Menaichmos and Soidas. In his explanation of the goddess' epithet 'Laphria', moreover, Pausanias makes reference to an 'archaic' statue, set up in mythological time by Laphrios, the son of Kastalios the son of Delphos.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the gold-and-ivory image of Menaichmos and Soidas was not the first temple statue of *Artemis Laphria*, but may also have supplemented an earlier one at Kalydon.<sup>50</sup> The precise date of the new gold-and-ivory figure, and of the sculptors themselves, remains the subject of scholarly controversy,<sup>51</sup> but it is unlikely that this commission preceded that of the *Parthenos*. In terms of cult, moreover, we have still more information: Pausanias explicitly says that the chryselephantine statue continued to be revered in the second century after Christ.<sup>52</sup>

These are all examples of expensive new statues in precious materials that were erected either in the same temples as old images, or in new temples built expressly for that purpose, in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, but statues were also commissioned even where no earlier ones existed, as at Epidauros. The sudden explosion in the cult of Asklepios in the fourth century BC transformed that sanctuary, today famous for its theatre, into a serious competitor with other Panhellenic sanctuaries. A great building programme was undertaken, and Thrasymedes of Paros was imported to depict the healing god in the Pheidian mode,

*Athens: Architectural Stages and Chronology*, AIA Monograph New Series 2 and *Hesperia*, Suppl. 26 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1993), pp. 93–8, 108–10, 123–5.

49 Pausanias 7.18.8–10. For Pausanias' use of the word *archaios* see J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 257–8.

50 Romano, 'Cult images', p. 369, notes the tradition regarding the early image, but it is unclear from Pausanias' account whether it survived to coexist with the chryselephantine one. The periegete's alternative explanation of the goddess' epithet suggests that it may not have.

51 For a review of the problems, see V. C. Goodlett, 'Collaboration in Greek sculpture: the literary and archaeological evidence', PhD dissertation, New York University, 1989, pp. 107–8.

52 Pausanias 7.18.9: 'To the Patrians Augustus gave, with other spoils from Kalydon, the statue of Laphria, which even in my time was still receiving honours on the Acropolis of Patras.' Following the history of the image, Pausanias describes the annual festival, including the sacrifice of a variety of wild beasts to the goddess (7.18.11–13). For the rarity of such sacrifices, in contrast to those of domestic animals, see e.g. L. Bruit Zaidman and P. Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 30, 37.

enthroned, with attributes and elaborate subsidiary iconography,<sup>53</sup> not only because that mode so successfully fulfilled so many of the needs outlined earlier, but also because it could best assert the international status of the sanctuary. Ultimately, like Pheidias' *Athena* and *Zeus*, Thrasymedes' *Asklepios* established the standard iconography for that god. These statues came to define the appearance of the gods, they became the images of them *par excellence*, as is clear in Aristides' vision of *Athena* as Pheidias had depicted her, as well as multiple representations of that goddess in various contexts. Stilpo had got it wrong. Pheidias had imaged *Zeus' Athena*, not his own.

Other gold-and-ivory statues of the gods were produced in later periods, serving various needs: when Vulca's terracotta statue of *Jupiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus* at Rome was destroyed by fire, it was replaced with a chryselephantine statue by a Greek named Apollonios (Calcidius, in *Platonis Timaeum* 337). Pliny the Elder mentions an ivory *Jupiter* by another Greek, Pasiteles, and a *Saturn* in the Roman Forum, which, like Pheidias' statues, was preserved by ministrations of oil (*Natural History* 15.32.4; 36.40). The Roman historian Suetonius, moreover, records that the emperor Augustus created the most expensive images of the gods (*Augustus* 57), and although overall specifics are lacking, the late antique *Curiosum Urbis* records over seventy ivory statues of gods in Rome.<sup>54</sup>

The chryselephantine technique served to the manifest essence of the gods, their other-worldly grandeur, beauty and power, and in that sense they, like all Greek images, were epiphanic, or, if you prefer, pseudo-epiphanic. Such images simultaneously demonstrated not only the piety but also the wealth and prestige of their dedicators, be they individuals or states, and this was no small matter in a competitive society. Thus, when a new power rose north of Greece in the late fourth century BC, it should come as no surprise that the chryselephantine technique was adopted to assert its status. Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander, however, took things one step further, adapting what we might call an iconography of the precious that had long been, and would continue to be, associated with the divine to represent themselves: they erected a chryselephantine family group at Olympia, within a stone's throw of Pheidias' *Zeus*.<sup>55</sup> Philip and Alexander both

53 Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 109–10.

54 H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Altertum*, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1871–1907), II, p. 572.

55 Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary*, pp. 115–19; and P. Schultz, 'Leochares' Argead portraits in the Philippeion', in P. Schultz and R. von den Hoff (eds), *Early Hellenistic Portraiture: Image, Style, Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 205–33.

appear to have assumed postures of superhuman status elsewhere, and though the issues surrounding their claims to divinity and ruler cult can be addressed far more competently by other contributors to this volume, it is, I think, relevant that among their successors, Ptolemy Philadelphos commissioned chryselephantine statues of his parents, Ptolemy Soter and Berenike, as saviour gods (Theocritus 17.121–5). We know of a few other Hellenistic monarchs with ivory portraits (Pausanias 5.12.7; Ammianus Marcellinus 22.13.1). And then there is Julius Caesar, who, according to Dio Cassius, was assassinated because his image, set alongside those of the gods as well as the early kings of Rome, roused Marcus Brutus to plot against him. Dio reports (43.45.2) that an ivory statue of Caesar was exhibited in the circus on the occasion of the Parilia, the festival celebrating the foundation of Rome. It had been voted by the Senate after the Battle of Munda, and although its messages of wealth, power and prestige might have been just what were needed, the implications of divinity were intolerable. Henceforth at Rome large-scale ivory portraits seem only to have been erected posthumously, and though the iconography of the Pheidian images continued to be employed by Roman emperors, as well as Christ Pantokrator and American presidents, that is another story.





**PART II**

**INDIVIDUAL DIVINITIES AND  
HEROES**



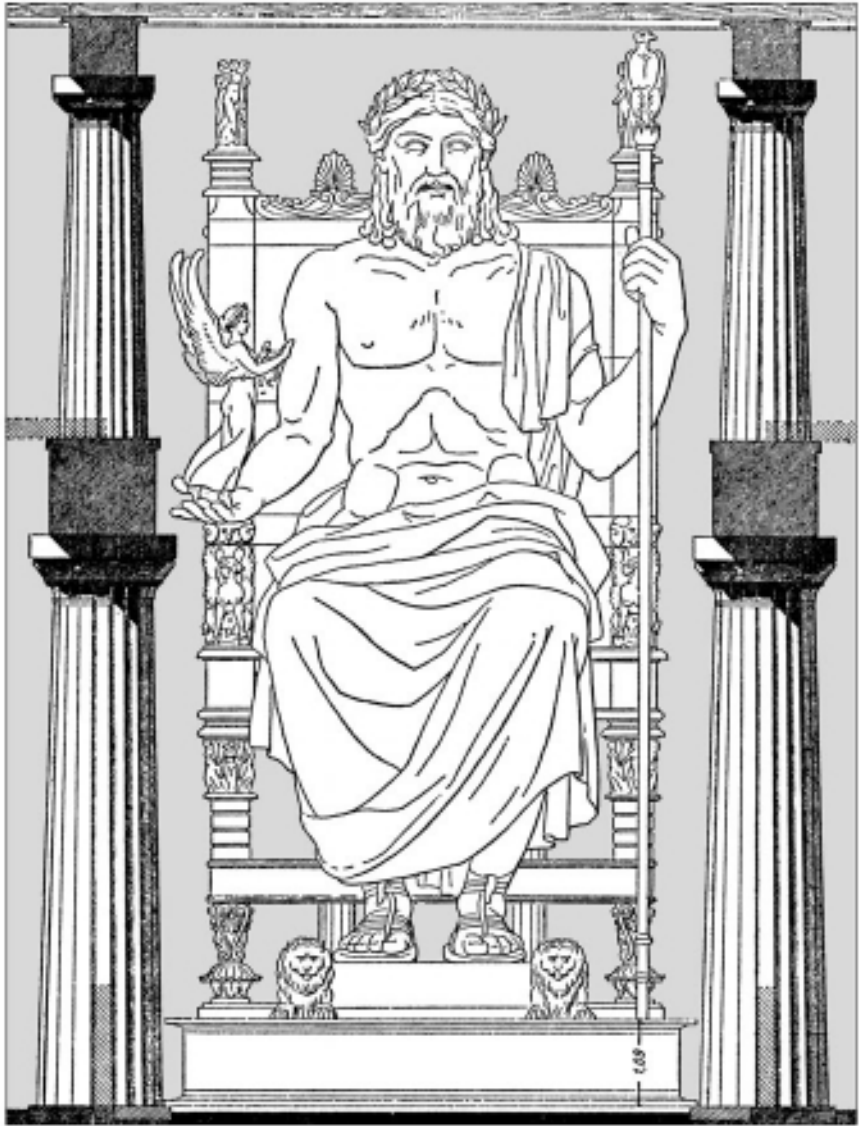
## ZEUS AT OLYMPIA

*Judith M. Barringer*

Olympia was the foremost sanctuary in honour of Zeus in the ancient world, and although the god had many manifestations at Olympia, none is so well known as the regal seated Olympian *Zeus* created by Pheidias for the temple of Zeus in c.438–432 BC (Figs. 8.1–8.3).<sup>1</sup> Its size, c.13.5 m high, and material, ivory and gold, guaranteed its fame, and it became the prevailing image of Zeus on coinage and in other media thenceforth. More common throughout Olympia's earlier history, however, are dynamic, standing images of the god and other dedications to Zeus that emphasize his concerns with adjudication, oaths and, above all, warfare. Military matters figured heavily at Olympia, as they did at other Panhellenic sanctuaries, such as Delphi. However, the emphasis upon warfare – weapons, victories, trophies, spoils – and its close association with athletics is particularly pronounced at Olympia, where Zeus was the chief god and the primary recipient of military thank-offerings, as we know from inscriptions to the god, especially in his guise as 'Zeus Olympios'. At no other sanctuary in the Greek world were athletic victory statues so prevalent, and their juxtaposition with military monuments is, I would argue, intentional and designed to underscore the similarities between athletics and warfare. While many

I thank Andrew Erskine and Jan Bremmer for the invitation to speak at the conference in Edinburgh, where questions from the audience helped develop this work further, as well as K. Herrmann of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut and X. Arapogianni, the former ephor of antiquities in Olympia, for their support and permission to study and photograph in the museum and on the site. The British Academy, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Loeb Classical Library Foundation provided funding for work in Greece at Olympia and at the library at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, for which I am very grateful. Finally, I wish to thank Hans Rupprecht Goette, who supplied most of the illustrations, discussed this subject with me, and read and offered helpful comments on the text.

1 The date is approximate and based on events in Pheidias' career. See e.g. *LIMC* 8, 327, s.v. Zeus [M. Tiverios]; H.-V. Herrmann, *Olympia: Heiligtum und Wettkampfstätte* (Munich: Hirmer, 1972), pp. 154–5.



*Figure 8.1* Reconstruction of the Pheidias Zeus, c.438–432 BC, originally located in Olympia, temple of Zeus.

gods had connections with warfare, and Zeus receives honours in this regard elsewhere, such as at Dodona, Olympia seems to represent a special case. This chapter will concentrate on images of warriors and Zeus, and the military associations of the god and Olympia until the end of the fifth century BC. Although this topic has been discussed piecemeal elsewhere, this martial manifestation of the god in the context of Olympia has never received full treatment.

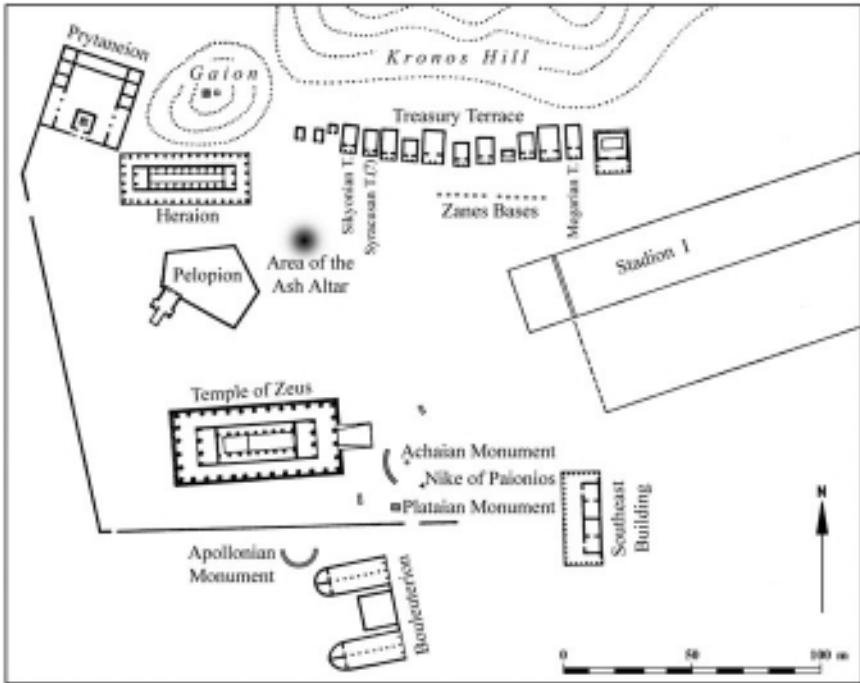


Figure 8.2 Plan of Olympia, c.450 BC.



Figure 8.3 Aerial view of Olympia from the east.

## IRON AGE OLYMPIA AND WARRIORS

The date of the inception of Zeus' worship at Olympia is difficult to judge but terracotta and bronze votives with military associations are among the earliest finds from the Iron Age site. The majority of the thousands of bronze and terracotta votive figurines of the tenth to eighth centuries BC were found in the black layer formed around the area of the Pelopion when the ashes of the altar of Zeus were dispersed, sometime between *c.* 700 and 600. Pausanias indicates that the earliest deities worshipped at Olympia were Ge, who had had an oracle in the earliest times (5.14.10), Eileithyia (6.20.1–6),<sup>2</sup> then Zeus; because most of the votive figurines were cattle and horses, we surmise that these early gods were honoured as agricultural deities, and in the case of Zeus as a weather deity. But some have argued that Zeus also was regarded as a warrior god from this early period,<sup>3</sup> as evidenced by just over forty terracotta votive figurines from *c.* 900 to *c.* 600 BC recovered from the site (Fig. 8.4a). Many of the figures are armed,<sup>4</sup> sometimes only with a helmet, elsewhere also equipped with sword band, shield and/or spear. Because of their uniformity, their numbers, and their numbers at Olympia as compared with elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> these have been identified as images of Zeus, specifically in his aspect as Zeus Areios.<sup>6</sup> Slightly later, helmeted male figurines of bronze raise their arms in what may be gestures of epiphany,<sup>7</sup> and these, too, represent a warlike Zeus, according to some views (Fig. 8.4b).<sup>8</sup> This position has been

2 N. Kreutz, *Zeus und die griechischen Poleis* (Tübingen: Marie Leidorf, 2007), p. 154; A. Moustaka, 'Zeus und Hera im Heiligtum von Olympia', in H. Kyrieleis (ed.), *Olympia 1875–2000: 125 Jahre deutsche Ausgrabungen* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2002), p. 302.

3 U. Sinn, 'Die Stellung der Wettkämpfe im Kult des Zeus Olympios', *Nikephoros* 4 (1991), p. 43.

4 W.-D. Heilmeyer, *Olympische Forschungen* 7: *Frühe Olympische Tonfiguren* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972), pp. 68–9.

5 E.g. Heilmeyer, *Olympische Forschungen* 7; E. Kunze, 'Zeusbilder in Olympia', *Antike und Abendland* 2 (1946), pp. 95–113 at 102–3.

6 Heilmeyer, *Olympische Forschungen* 7, pp. 61–5; A. Mallwitz, *Olympia und seine Bauten* (Darmstadt: Prestel-Verlag, 1972), p. 20. *Contra*: U. Sinn, 'Das Heiligtum der Artemis Limnatis bei Kombotekra', *Athenische Mitteilungen* 96 (1981), pp. 25–71 at 38–9.

7 W.-D. Heilmeyer, 'Frühe olympische Bronzefiguren: die Wagnvotive', *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 9 (1994), p. 207 nos. 28–33; Mallwitz, *Olympia*, p. 21, fig. 10.

8 E. Kunze, 'Kleinplastik aus Bronze', *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 8 (1967), p. 213; Kunze, 'Zeusbilder', pp. 98ff. *Contra*: N. Himmelmann, 'La vie religieuse à Olympie', in A. Pasquier (ed.), *Olympie* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2001), pp. 155–79; N. Papalexandrou, *The Visual Poetics of Power: Warriors, Youths, and Tripods in Early Greece* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).



Figure 8.4a Terracotta figurine of warrior, c. 900 BC, Olympia Museum.



Figure 8.4b Bronze figurine with gesture of epiphany (Zeus?), early eighth century BC, Olympia Museum.

challenged and the figures identified as worshippers instead.<sup>9</sup> It seems impossible to determine whether the figures are Zeus or worshippers

9 Papalexandrou, *The Visual Poetics of Power*, pp. 167–9, who interprets the figures as worshippers, not gods. See also *ibid.*, pp. 100–2, where Papalexandrou criticizes Kunze's methods and conclusions, and argues instead that most of the bronze figurines designated as Zeus are not, and moreover, that most of these figures were not free-standing bronzes but attachments to bronze cauldrons, which Kunze recognizes (see E. Kunze, 'Bronzestatuetten', *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 4 [1940–1], pp. 116–25). Papalexandrou does not indicate awareness of Kunze's 1940–1 publication. Papalexandrou's arguments, however, lose some of their weight when he argues against Kunze's underlying conclusion that the same representational schema could be used for gods and men, for which the only evidence offered is Homeric poetry. The visual arts tell a completely different story – think, for example, of the controversy over kouroi and whether they represent Apollo or not. Likewise, Papalexandrou is equally uninformed in his discussion of Olympia's earliest cults, among which he claims there is no fertility cult, when we know that both Gaia and Eileithyia were worshipped, perhaps even earlier than Zeus.

with the current state of our knowledge. What is clear, however, is that armed male votives were suitable gifts in the early Olympian sanctuary. Further evidence comes from several male bronze figurines armed as warriors, who are not identifiable as divinities by means of gesture or attribute,<sup>10</sup> and bronze chariots of the late ninth to early eighth century, presumably once drawn by horses, which are now lost, and ridden by armed figures, who wear helmets and belts.<sup>11</sup> Such votives contribute to the evidence to support the claim that Olympia and its early deities, presumably Zeus if we can believe Pausanias, had a strong military aspect.

### THE EARLIEST IMAGES OF ZEUS

There is greater consensus in identifying Zeus among later geometric bronze figurines of armed males, some of whom are beardless: they wear helmets, usually have upraised arms for throwing a spear, a characteristic pose for Zeus in the geometric period, and sometimes held a shield to judge from the position of their left arms (Fig. 8.5a).<sup>12</sup>

One of the early bronze warrior figurines was found under the floor of the Heraion of c.600 BC,<sup>13</sup> which is the earliest monumental building at Olympia in the historical period (Figs. 8.2–8.3, 8.5a, 8.6). In spite of its appellation, it is now generally believed that the temple was originally dedicated only to Zeus and that Hera was added to the cult at Olympia only in the fifth century BC.<sup>14</sup> When Pausanias visited

10 Heilmeyer, 'Frühe olympische Bronzefiguren', p. 207 nos. 19–27; Kunze, 'Kleinplastik', pp. 224–36; Kunze, 'Bronzestatuetten', pp. 106–7, Taf. 32:3–5.

11 E.g. Athens, National Museum 6190. See Heilmeyer, 'Frühe olympische Bronzefiguren', pp. 195–8, 205 nos. 73–5 (note that no. 75 originally had two figures in the chariot box), 207–8 nos. 53–60; W.-D. Heilmeyer, 'Wagenvotive', *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 10 (1981), pp. 67–71; Kunze, 'Bronzestatuetten', pp. 109–13, Taf. 34–5. I thank Andy Stewart for reminding me of these.

12 Heilmeyer, 'Frühe olympische Bronzefiguren', p. 207 nos. 34–8; Heilmeyer, *Olympische Forschungen* 7, p. 71; Kunze, 'Bronzestatuetten', pp. 114–25, Taf. 32:3, 36, 38–46.

13 Kunze, 'Zeusbilder', p. 101; Kunze, 'Bronzestatuetten', pp. 119, 121–3, Taf. 42.

14 Moustaka, 'Zeus und Hera', followed by U. Sinn, 'Olympias "Neue Kleider": Auf der Suche nach dem Kultbild des Zeusheiligtums', in B. Bradt et al. (eds), *Synergia: Festschrift für Friedrich Krinzinger* 2 (Vienna: Phoibos, 2005), pp. 361–2, and 'Die Stellung des Hera-Tempels im Kultbetrieb von Olympia', in M. Bietak (ed.), *Archaische griechische Tempel und Ägypten* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001), pp. 63–70. A. Jacquemin, 'Pausanias, témoin de la religion grecque dans le sanctuaire d'Olympie', in A. Pasquier (ed.), *Olympie* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2001), pp. 181–213 at 185–6, even argues that the primary deities at the site were not Zeus and Hera, but Zeus and Demeter. *Contra*: Kreutz, *Zeus*, pp. 154–5, 157, who believes that Hera may predate Zeus by centuries; N. Riedel, 'Zu Heratempel und Zeustempel in Olympia', in W. Hoepfner





*Figure 8.5a* Bronze figurine ('Steiner'sche Bronze') of warrior (Zeus?), c. 680 BC, Olympia Museum.



*Figure 8.5b* Zeus Keraunios from Olympia, c. 500 BC.

in the second century AD, he noted cult statues of Zeus and Hera in the building and described the standing figure of Zeus as wearing a helmet and as bearded (5.17.1).<sup>15</sup> Nothing of these statues survives,

and G. Zimmer (eds), *Die griechische Polis: Architektur und Politik* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1993), p. 82; I. B. Romano, 'Early Greek cult images', PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1980, pp. 146–7.

<sup>15</sup> Beardless images of Zeus do exist elsewhere at Olympia, according to Pausanias, who records at least three at Olympia (5.24.6), one of which was part of the offering of Mikythos, c. 460 BC.



Figure 8.6 Olympia, model of Altis, view from south, c. 350 BC.

although the original base does.<sup>16</sup> We have already discussed the possibility that the Hera cult may be a later fifth-century addition; let us deal here only with the Zeus statue. What is the date of the image that Pausanias saw? Pausanias calls the two statues *ἀπλά*, suggesting their antiquity even then, and since they stood on the original base, it is possible that the statues date before the construction in 470–456 BC of the temple of Zeus,<sup>17</sup> which became the chief structure in which the god was worshipped. It may be that the Zeus cult statue, whether it was the one Pausanias cites or not, was moved from the Heraion to the temple of Zeus when the latter was completed, where it served as the cult image until Pheidias' creation of the chryselephantine kolossos in c. 435–430 BC (Fig. 8.1).<sup>18</sup> If this was the image that Pausanias saw, then it predates the Pheidian Zeus.

### MANIFESTATIONS OF ZEUS: HORKIOS, KERAUNIOS, WARRIOR, ADJUDICATOR

Zeus the adjudicator or lawgiver is given special prominence at Olympia with regard to its famed athletic games: athletes and trainers

16 See Romano, 'Cult images', pp. 139–43, who reconstructs the image as over life-size and of wood; and A. Mallwitz, 'Das Heraion von Olympia und seine Vorgänger', *JDAI* 81 (1966), pp. 310–76 at 325–7, for a discussion of the date of the base.

17 E.g. Kunze, 'Bronzestatuetten', p. 123 n. 3, believes that the Zeus that Pausanias sees in the Heraion belongs to the time of its construction, c. 600 BC.

18 See Romano, 'Cult images', p. 144, for discussion and bibliography.

took their oath of fair play in front of a statue of Zeus Horkios, the Oath Zeus (Paus. 5.24.9–11), who wielded a thunderbolt in each hand and is known from literature and objects elsewhere (e.g. *Iliad* 7.411). Those who broke the oath and cheated were required to fund bronze statues of Zeus erected on inscribed bases lining the path to the Stadion (Paus. 5.21.2–4). The sixteen surviving ‘Zanes bases’ – the earliest extant examples date from the fourth century BC – record the occasion and the cheater, and served as a public warning to those athletes about to compete (Figs. 8.2, 8.6). From cuttings on the tops of the bases, we can deduce that Zeus stood in contrapposto, but we can assume nothing more.

In the archaic and early classical periods, numerous bronze figurines of a thunderbolt- or lightning-wielding Zeus (Zeus Keraunios) appear at Olympia and elsewhere in Greece (Fig. 8.5b),<sup>19</sup> and Elean coins of the late archaic and classical period employed this type as an image on their reverses.<sup>20</sup> The god was worshipped in this aspect at his own altar at Olympia (Paus. 5.14.6), and this type of statue was used for military thank-offerings at Olympia.<sup>21</sup> While Zeus’ weapon is not conventional, its power is devastating, and writers and artists offer evidence that thunderbolt and spear were interchangeable for the god. Pindar likens Zeus’ lightning bolt to a spear (*O.* 13.77), and Zeus’ thunderbolt was often used as a weapon (for example, in depictions of the Gigantomachy). Indeed, it has been argued that images of Zeus Keraunios are images of Zeus Areios,<sup>22</sup> who was honoured at Olympia by an altar (Paus. 5.14.6).

Zeus Areios is particularly intriguing in this discussion because Ares is closely associated with Oinomaos, whose house at Olympia was destroyed by the thunderbolt of Zeus. Oinomaos was the legendary king of Pisa and is best known for his role in the chariot race against Pelops, hero of Elis. As a result of Pelops’ victory, Oinomaos was overthrown, and Pelops won the hand of Oinomaos’ daughter and his kingdom. According to some mythological traditions, this was the founding event of the Olympic games (Pind. *O.* 1.67–88), though we should note that elsewhere, Pindar credits Herakles with founding the sanctuary with spoils of war from Pisa (*O.* 10.43–60), another link between Olympia and warfare. The chariot-race myth

19 See *LIMC* 8, s.v. Zeus, 324 nos. 62ff. [M. Tiverios]; W. Schwabacher, ‘Olympischer Blitzschwinger’, *Antike Kunst* 5 (1962), pp. 9–17; Kunze, ‘Bronzestatuetten’, pp. 134–6, Taf. 51–2.

20 Schwabacher ‘Olympischer Blitzschwinger’.

21 See *LIMC* 8, s.v. Zeus, 331 no. 129 [M. Tiverios].

22 C. Kardara, ‘Olympia: Perithoos Apollo or Zeus Areios?’, *Archaiologikon Deltion* 25 (1970), pp. 12–19 at 13.

mirrors a historical reality: the conquest of Pisa (Oinomaos) by Elis (Pelops) in c.470 BC, which funded the construction of the temple of Zeus in the Altis.<sup>23</sup> The altar of Zeus Areios at Olympia was the location where Oinomaos sacrificed before his races against the suitors vying for his daughter's hand (Paus. 5.14.6–7; there were thirteen before Pelops raced and won), and ancient authors sometimes name Areas as Oinomaos' father (Diod. 4.73; Paus. 5.1.6). As for Zeus' actions against Oinomaos, Pausanias (5.20.6) reports that Oinomaos' house once existed in the area of the Altis, and that it was struck by a thunderbolt (Paus. 5.14.7), which destroyed all but one column that was covered by a shelter to protect and preserve it. In its place was constructed an altar of Zeus Keraunios. Read in historical terms, the destruction of the king's house by a thunderbolt signifies Zeus' destruction of Oinomaos' presence at, or control of, Olympia. In other words, the myth explains Pisa's rule of the Altis, and its downfall to Elis, whose control was favoured by Zeus. Pisa belongs to Zeus (Pind. *O.* 2.3), and we have seen that Pindar credits Herakles with founding the games from the spoils of war (*O.* 2.4). Thus, Zeus' powerful thunderbolt obliterates Oinomaos' house and power at Olympia. Because Oinomaos was the son of Ares, Zeus' actions might be viewed as an appropriation and an explanation of his epithet as Zeus Areios.

Zeus' intervention in Elean and Pisan relations is most visible on the east pediment of the temple of Zeus, which was funded by Elis from the spoils of war against Pisa (Paus. 5.10.2). The sculptural group portrays the moment just before the chariot race between Pelops and Oinomaos (Fig. 8.7).<sup>24</sup> Zeus stands in the centre of the composition, his left hand grasping an object, now lost, which can only be his thunderbolt. Here, we can recognize Zeus Horkios in his guise as an adjudicator or as witnessing an oath of fair play taken by the competitors. Details of the composition, however, also point to Zeus' military role. Pelops and Oinomaos both wear helmets, and both originally held spears planted on the ground. Pelops also held a shield, as indicated by the shield band remaining on his left forearm, and once wore a bronze or metal cuirass, as evidenced by the holes for attachment

23 It is worth noting, however, that the myth existed prior to this military conquest; it was depicted on the Chest of Kypselos at Olympia of the mid-sixth century BC (Paus. 5.17.5–19.10), and there is also an earlier historical event that may have inspired its use, the Elean defeat of Pisa in c.580–570, which gave control of Olympia to Elis. See N. B. Crowther, 'Elis and Olympia: city, sanctuary, and politics', in D. J. Phillips and D. Pritchard (eds), *Sport and Festival in the Ancient Greek World* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2003), pp. 62, 64, who offers the *leges sacrae* as evidence.

24 See now J. Barringer, 'The temple of Zeus at Olympia, heroes, and athletes', *Hesperia* 74 (2005), pp. 211–41, for a discussion of the temple's sculptures.



Figure 8.7 East pediment sculptures (central figures), temple of Zeus, Olympia, c.470–456 BC.

on his torso.<sup>25</sup> Such armour is peculiar equipment for a chariot race but makes sense in the context of Olympia, where Zeus was honoured for the success he dispensed in warfare and in athletics, and written sources attest that Oinomaos, son of Ares, carried a spear with which to kill the unsuccessful suitors in the chariot race (e.g. Pind. *O.* 1.77).

### THE ORACLE AT OLYMPIA

In addition to the myths and early offerings that attest to Zeus' (and Olympia's) association with warfare, we can point to the oracle of Zeus at Olympia, founded by Apollo. The oracle was regularly consulted on military matters at Olympia in the fifth and fourth centuries (e.g. Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.22, 4.7.2),<sup>26</sup> and some scholars have argued for

25 Some scholars believe that Pelops' cuirass was a later addition to the original statue. See Barringer, 'Temple of Zeus', p. 226 n. 44.

26 On the oracle, see A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité* (Grenoble: Leroux, 2003, reprint of the edition of 1879–82), pp. 499–503; Sinn, 'Die Stellung der Wettkämpfe', who dates its inception at least to the eighth century BC and notes its new prominence in the seventh century BC for west Greek colonists (46ff.); H. W. Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus: Dodona, Olympia, Ammon* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), pp. 164–93. Xenophon, *Hell.* 3.2.22, says, however, that the Eleians claimed in the fourth century that the oracle could not be consulted about war against other Greeks; this apparently did not hold true earlier – and not then, either, as is clear from Xenophon, *Hell.* 4.7.2. An earlier oracle to Gaia was reported by Pausanias (5.14.10), and Mallwitz, *Olympia und seine Bauten*, p. 65, speculates that the early oracle consisted of Gaia, Themis and Zeus. See also Sophocles, *OT* 897–903; and Strabo 8.3.30, who places the oracle's date before the instigation of the games at Olympia. Cf. the oracle of Zeus at Dodona,

its existence early on in Olympia's history.<sup>27</sup> The oracle was atop the ash altar (Pind. *O.* 6.70), where readings were taken of the flames in response to queries (cf. Pind. *O.* 8.2–8; see also Hdt. 8.134). As a measure of its importance in the fifth century, Pindar ranks the oracle and Olympic games at the same level of importance (*O.* 6. 8). Even the games included a military aspect: the armed race, *hoplitodromos*, which was added to the roster of athletic events at Olympia in c.520 BC to provide military training (Paus. 5.8.10),<sup>28</sup> combines military and athletic *agon*. Moreover, Pausanias (5.12.8) also reports that twenty-five bronze shields used by the *hoplitodromos* participants, presumably of equal weight and size, were kept in the temple of Zeus.

### MILITARY VOTIVES: ZEUS TRIUMPHANT

Zeus' association with warfare at Olympia and its success are further documented by the many military votives offered to him, either thank-offerings funded by spoils of war or propitiatory dedications. The practice of a victorious polis dedicating a tenth part of the spoils of war at Olympia had already begun in the late eighth century BC.<sup>29</sup> War booty financed the construction of temples in Zeus' honour, such as the temple of Zeus discussed above and the Heraion dedicated by the city of Triphylia, and of treasuries as thank-offerings. Pausanias (6.19.13), for example, relates that the Megarian treasury was built from spoils of war taken from Corinth, as indicated by an inscribed shield on the gable.<sup>30</sup> In addition to these larger structures, two types of military victory monuments occur at Olympia (and at other Panhellenic sites): *tropaia* – military trophies, presumably weapons hung, nailed or fastened on a wooden support,<sup>31</sup> and sculpted figural monuments or sometimes pillars, created of stone and/or bronze, that piously give thanks for Zeus' assistance in warfare and, of course, trumpet the success of the victorious forces.

(footnote 26 *continued*)

which is mentioned as early as *Iliad* 16.233–5, and is archaeologically attested as early as the eighth century BC; *ThesCRA* 3, 31–2 [W. Burkert].

27 A. Moustaka, 'On the cult of Hera at Olympia', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Peloponnesian Sanctuaries and Cults* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 2002), pp. 199–205 at 201, states that the numerous tripods dedicated during the geometric period are related to the oracle; Sinn, 'Die Stellung der Wettkämpfe'.

28 See Barringer, 'Temple of Zeus', p. 228 n.49.

29 H. Baitinger, 'Waffen und Bewaffnung aus der Perserbeute in Olympia', *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1999), p. 125.

30 H. Baitinger, *Olympische Forschungen 29: Die Angriffswaffen aus Olympia* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2001), p. 84.

31 Baitinger, 'Waffen und Bewaffnung', pp. 125–6.

Although no trace of the wooden supports for tropaia is extant to give us an accurate sense of their appearance, we know of their depictions in other media, including transformations into marble sculptures. However, the armour itself survives in abundance, particularly at Olympia, where thousands of pieces of defensive armour and weapons – shields, helmets, greaves, spear points, over 500 arrowheads, arm guards, swords, daggers and breastplates – many inscribed ‘to Zeus’ and dating from the early seventh century to the end of the fifth century, have been recovered (Fig. 8.8a).<sup>32</sup> Traces of holes on the blocks of the south wall of Stadion I suggest that armour was hung here – not just the place with the greatest audience, but the location of the athletic events save for the horse racing; this practice apparently continued in Stadion II, and tropaia were also erected in the Altis itself (Figs. 8.2, 8.3, 8.6).<sup>33</sup> Pausanias (6.19.4–5, 7) also mentions armour dedications from war booty in the Sikyonian and Syracusan treasuries at Olympia, which date from c.480–470 BC (Figs. 8.2, 8.6).<sup>34</sup> Although dedicating armour at Panhellenic sanctuaries is not unusual – Delphi has also produced many examples<sup>35</sup> – the armour recovered at Olympia vastly outnumbers that from other sites. For example, Isthmia has produced only a small fraction of that found at Olympia, and all of this from the archaic period; no armour was found from the period after c.470 BC, when fire destroyed the archaic temple, in spite of the temple’s rebuilding afterwards. To give some hard numbers: Isthmia received ‘at a minimum over 200 helmets’,<sup>36</sup> while Olympia has produced c.1,000 helmets and fragments of helmets, of which Corinthian helmets, numbering about 600, comprise the largest group.<sup>37</sup> Isthmia has yielded scarcely a dozen swords and little body armour,<sup>38</sup> while Olympia had about 840 metal lance blades, dozens

32 Baitinger, *Olympische Forschungen* 29; Heilmeyer, *Olympische Forschungen* 7, p. 63.

33 Baitinger, *Olympische Forschungen* 29, p. 81.

34 Ibid., p. 248.

35 Including a Cretan helmet and two Cretan shields, Persian shields from Marathon and Plataia on the temple metopes, the Persian trophies displayed in the Portico of the Athenians and in the west hall, a Corinthian helmet, and parts of shields. It is not known whether Delphi had tropaia on its stadion walls, as was the case at Olympia, or not. See M. Maass, *Das antike Delphi* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993), pp. 132, 137–8.

36 A. Jackson, ‘Arms and armour at the Panhellenic sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia’, in W. Coulson and H. Kyrieleis (eds), *Proceedings of an International Symposium on the Olympic Games (September, 1988)* (Athens: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Athen, 1992), p. 141.

37 H. Frielinghaus, *Olympische Forschungen* 33: *Die Helme von Olympia: ein Beitrag zu Waffenweihungen in griechischen Heiligtümern* (Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming).

38 Jackson, ‘Arms and armour’, p. 141.



*Figure 8.8a* Selection of bronze helmets, Olympia Museum.



*Figure 8.8b* Gilt bronze Persian helmet, c.490 BC, Olympia Museum.



of swords, and hundreds and hundreds of other pieces of offensive weapons,<sup>39</sup> as well as c.200 greaves.<sup>40</sup> It would be hard to argue that Olympia received more visitors than, say, Delphi, whose oracle attracted vast numbers of religious pilgrims to the site, and literary sources attest that Delphi received large dedications of weapons (e.g. Hdt. 8.27), which have not survived. The role of chance in the survival of objects is surely important in this dichotomy between Olympia and Delphi – there are many wells packed with material at Olympia and far fewer at Delphi, in part because of topography and natural disasters (landslides at Delphi), but Olympia suffered many floods and earthquakes that surely damaged some of its material. It seems that the element of chance with regard to what has been found may not be the only factor to account for such an overwhelming difference in numbers.<sup>41</sup>

Occasionally, an individual would make an offering, such as the famed and successful Athenian general Miltiades, who dedicated a bronze helmet (Olympia Museum B2600), as indicated by its inscription.<sup>42</sup> But this is uncommon, and these individual votives may have been part of larger civic *tropaia*.<sup>43</sup> Dedicated armour and weapons were usually inscribed with the name of the victorious polis and the defeated army, but the occasion for the dedication is rarely mentioned on the inscribed armour from Olympia, unlike that elsewhere. At Olympia, dedications were made from poleis in Attika, Boeotia, Ozolian Lokris, the Peloponnese and especially Magna Graecia, a practice that may have been prompted by a colony's desire to align itself more closely with the Greek world.<sup>44</sup>

The defensive and offensive weapons were usually rendered unusable both at Olympia and other sanctuaries: cheek-pieces on helmets were bent back, or defensive armour was pierced, usually from the inside.<sup>45</sup> Explanations for why this was done range from the religious

39 Baitinger, *Olympische Forschungen* 29.

40 E. Kunze, *Olympische Forschungen* 21: *Beinschienen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991).

41 U. Sinn, 'Die Entwicklung des Zeuskultes von Olympia bei Strabo [VIII 3, 30 p. 353f.]', in A. M. Biraschi (ed.), *Strabone e la Grecia* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1994), pp. 147–66 at 160–1, and other scholars have remarked on the extraordinary wealth of such monuments at Olympia and its having no parallel elsewhere, but have not offered accident of survival as an explanation.

42 See e.g. Baitinger, *Olympische Forschungen* 29, p. 244; E. Kunze, 'Eine Weihung des Miltiades', *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 5 (1956), pp. 69–74.

43 Baitinger, 'Waffen und Bewaffnung', p. 137.

44 E.g. C. Ioakimidou, 'Auch wir sind Griechen! Statuenreihen westgriechischer Kolonisten in Delphi und Olympia', *Nikephoros* 13 (2000), pp. 63–94.

45 E.g. Baitinger, *Olympische Forschungen* 29, pp. 89–90; A. Jackson, 'Hoplites and the gods: the dedication of captured arms and armour', in V. D. Hanson (ed.), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London and New York:

– the votive was made and could not be reused for any other purpose<sup>46</sup> – to the more hard-headedly pragmatic – the public and ready-made arsenal for any army eager to fight was rendered ineffectual.<sup>47</sup> And while some implements bear telltale signs of having been used in battle, it is clear that a number of the armour votives were probably not intended for practical use, because of their size or extraordinarily well-preserved details of elaborate ornamentation. These votives were presumably symbolic substitutes for enemy weapons or those of the victors, thank-offerings to Zeus for the victory rendered.

Captured arms not only were erected on tropaia but also could be affixed to other monuments at Olympia. We have noted the offerings both in and on treasuries, and Pausanias (5.10.4) tells us that the Spartans dedicated a shield, in honour of their victory over the Athenians, Ionians and Argives at the Battle of Tanagra in 457 BC, on the apex of the temple of Zeus, which is how we establish the *terminus ante quem* for the structure (the roof had to be finished for this dedication to be made).<sup>48</sup> Numerous dedications at Olympia of armour from the Persian Wars are especially noteworthy, such as the gilt bronze Persian helmet inscribed ‘The Athenians dedicate [this], taken from the Medes, to Zeus’, and fifty bronze arrowheads (Fig. 8.8b).<sup>49</sup> Although the specific battle is never noted on the Persian armour, the date (and therefore the likely event) is deduced from the date of the find spot; in the case of the conical bronze helmet, its deposition date is before c.470–460 BC, and the naming of the Athenians as sole dedicants suggests perhaps the Battle of Marathon in 490, where the Athenians played such an important role.<sup>50</sup> The numerous Persian weapons found near the late archaic and early classical stadion walls (IIIA: 465–455 BC) at the southeast side of the Altis may have formed part of a single large tropaion to mark victory over Persians (Figs. 8.2, 8.6).<sup>51</sup>

The dedications of armour at Olympia appear to stop c.440 BC with only a few exceptions (the *Nike* of Paionios, see below; Mummius’ dedication of twenty-one gilt shields, booty from the Achaeans, which

(footnote 45 *continued*)

Routledge, 1991), pp. 228–49 at 246; A. Jackson, ‘Some deliberate damage to archaic Greek helmets dedicated at Olympia’, *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 8:2 (1983), pp. 22–7.

46 Jackson, ‘Hoplites and the gods,’ p. 246; Jackson, ‘Deliberate damage’.

47 Jackson, ‘Deliberate damage’, pp. 25–7.

48 W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Olympia 5: Die Inschriften* (Berlin: Asher, 1896), pp. 369–74 no. 253.

49 Baitinger, ‘Waffen und Bewaffnung’, pp. 128–9.

50 Baitinger, ‘Waffen und Bewaffnung’, pp. 126–7; W. Gauer, *Weihgeschenke aus den Perserkriegen* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1968), pp. 22–3, 42.

51 Baitinger, ‘Waffen und Bewaffnung’, p. 137.

were affixed to the metopes on the temple of Zeus in c. 146 BC; see Paus. 5.10.5).<sup>52</sup> After that, one finds votive deposits, outside but close to the Altis, of metal bars – bronze and one silver – in fixed measures and with dedicatory inscriptions, though no donor is named. These may have been substitutes for the armour dedications and accorded in weight with the intended armour dedication. Scholars have puzzled over this change but have not reached consensus as to why it occurs. Siewert, for example, points to growing Panhellenism at the end of the fifth century and a concurrent distaste for tropaia celebrating victories over other Greek poleis as a reason.<sup>53</sup> But if so, why were elaborate victory monuments erected without tropaia, which trumpeted one Greek city's victory over another? In addition to the prominent *Nike* of Paionios (Fig. 8.9a–b; see below), we can also note the bronze trophy erected in the Altis by the Eleans to celebrate their triumph over the Spartans at the end of the fifth or beginning of the fourth century BC (Paus. 5.27.11, 6.2.8).

Whatever the reason for the cessation of armour votives at Olympia, other sculpted, sometimes more elaborate, military victory monuments dedicated to Zeus continued throughout the fifth century BC and into the fourth. These bronze and marble statues stood in the Altis close to the temple of Zeus. Our knowledge of these works depends heavily on Pausanias' account of the monuments at Olympia and on the fragmentary remains, sometimes consisting only of an inscribed base. Many of these military monuments were statues of Zeus himself, often over life-size, but in most cases, we have little information about Zeus' appearance (he is beardless in some instances). Herodotus (9.81.1) and Pausanias (5.23.1), for example, describe the kolossos of Zeus (c. 4.5 m high) facing eastwards, erected by numerous Greek poleis in honour of the victory over the Persians at Plataia in 479.<sup>54</sup> Like the many other colossal statues of Zeus dedicated as military monuments at Olympia, the statue itself is not extant but the poros base foundation (c. 3 m × 1.90 m) and one course of the marble stepped monument are still *in situ* 5 m north of the southern embankment wall.<sup>55</sup> The shape of the base suggests a striding Zeus, perhaps hurling a thunderbolt.<sup>56</sup> Pausanias

52 On possible reasons for the termination of this practice, see P. Siewert, 'Votivbarren und das Ende der Waffen- und Geräteweiungen in Olympia', *Athenische Mitteilungen* 111 (1006), pp. 141–8; Jackson 'Hoplites and the gods,' p. 228.

53 Siewert, 'Votivbarren'.

54 Gauer, *Weihgeschenke*, pp. 96–8.

55 F. Eckstein, *ANAΘHMATA: Studien zu den Weihgeschenken strengen Stils im Heiligtum von Olympia* (Berlin: Mann, 1969), pp. 23–6.

56 Himmelmann, 'La vie religieuse à Olympie', p. 159. Cf. the Artemision Zeus, Athens, National Museum X15161; see N. Kaltsas, *Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens*, tr. D. Hardy (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002), pp. 92–3.



*Figure 8.9a Nike of Paionios, c.420 BC Olympia Museum.*



Figure 8.9b Pillar of Nike of Paionios, c.420 BC, Olympia, Altis.

(5.23.7) also mentions an image of Zeus, a tithe from the booty gathered by the Kleitorians from many cities, but nothing of this monument has been located. Additionally, we hear of a 3.7 m high *Zeus* near the temple of Zeus dedicated by the Spartans as a propitiatory offering for a war with the Messenians (5.24.3), and here, the inscribed circular base of c.500–490 BC has been found but the statue does not survive.<sup>57</sup> From booty taken in a war with the Arcadians c.363 BC, the Eleans erected an 8 m high *Zeus* (Paus. 5.24.4), the largest of all bronze Zeus statues at Olympia, according to the periegete – and once again, the inscribed conglomerate base survives, although the statue does not.<sup>58</sup> The Chersonnesians from Knidos dedicated statues of Zeus and Pelops from booty (Paus. 5.24.7), but the occasion for the dedication is unknown and no base survives, thus the monument's date is unknown. Other statues of Zeus were also funded by war booty: one sponsored by the Thessalians from the spoils of their war with Phocis (Paus. 5.24.1–2) in c.480 BC;<sup>59</sup> another dedicated by the Psophidians as

57 L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, rev. with a supplement by A. W. Johnston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) pp. 196, 201 no. 49, pl. 37; Dittenberger and Purgold, *Olympia* 5, pp. 367–70 no. 252.

58 Dittenberger and Purgold, *Olympia* 5, pp. 383–6 no. 260.

59 Baitinger, *Olympische Forschungen* 29, p. 247.

a thank-offering for success in warfare (Paus. 5.24.2; date unknown); and two dedicated by Mummius c.146 BC from spoils gained from the Achaeans (Paus. 5.24.4, 8). Of the monuments mentioned here, the original placement of only one, the Plataian Monument, is now known to us (Figs. 8.2, 8.3, 8.6). But many of the extant bases carrying images of Zeus are rectangular, suggesting a striding figure, and from comparisons with images of Zeus elsewhere and in other media, it is likely that he was portrayed as Zeus Keraunios, that is, with his thunderbolt (cf. Fig. 8.5b). This sampling encourages us to think of the Altis as heavily populated with bronze images of Zeus in various sizes, but always life-size or larger, broadcasting the military success of victorious cities.<sup>60</sup>

By contrast with these now lost bronze depictions of Zeus, the marble *Nike* made by the sculptor Paionios and erected atop an inscribed triangular marble pillar has survived very well (Fig. 8.9a–b). The inscription and Pausanias (5.26.1) declare that the monument honours the Messenian and Naupaktian victory over the Spartans dated to 425 BC,<sup>61</sup> while attachment holes and circular weathering patterns testify to circular bronze shields that were once attached to the pillar. When complete, the victory monument towered 10.92 m high just to the south of the entrance to the temple of Zeus (the *Nike* alone is c.2 m high) and was therefore impossible to miss for anyone entering the temple or, for that matter, walking in the Altis.<sup>62</sup> The *Nike* seems intended as a response to the Spartan shield displayed on the temple from the Battle of Tanagra in 457 BC; such inter-polis rivalry is typical of monuments in Panhellenic sanctuaries, especially Olympia and Delphi.<sup>63</sup>

Other military victory monuments employ the conceit of myth to make their point. Pausanias (5.22.3–4) describes a dedication to Zeus by the people from Apollonia, a colony from Corinth and Corcyra, in Illyria (modern Albania), erected with a tithe of the spoils from their conquest of Abantis and Thronion, which held lucrative asphalt mines, a conflict dated in the first half of the fifth century BC.<sup>64</sup> Pausanias names the sculptor as Lykios, son of Myron, and his account led to the

60 One can add statues of Athena and Nike offered as military victory monuments on a smaller scale. See Paus. 5.26.6–7.

61 Dittenberger and Purgold, *Olympia* 5, pp. 377–84 no. 259.

62 A. Mallwitz and H.-V. Herrmann, *Die Funde aus Olympia* (Athens: Kasas, 1980), pp. 189–91.

63 Another *Nike* funded by spoils of war was erected by the Mantineans, perhaps in the middle of the fifth century BC. See Paus. 5.26.6.

64 For the monument, see M. P. Castiglioni, 'Il Monumento degli Apolloniati a Olimpia', *MEFRA* 115 (2003), pp. 867–80; Ioakimidou, 'Auch wir sind Griechen!', pp. 73–6; C. Ioakimidou, *Die Statuenreihen griechischer Poleis und Bünde aus*

discovery of part of the base of the semi-circular monument opening to the north – that is, towards the processional way, opposite the south flank of the temple of Zeus – and the association of a dedicatory inscription with it (Figs. 8.2, 8.3, 8.6).<sup>65</sup> The physical remains consist of seven blocks of the limestone base and six blocks of Parian marble with cuttings for attached bronze statues that formed the second step of the monument. Together with Pausanias' description, the blocks indicate that the base, 13 m in diameter when restored, supported thirteen over life-size bronze statues: Zeus seated in the centre, flanked by Thetis and Eos (supplicating Zeus on their knees or standing), then five pairs of opposed Achaean and Trojan heroes, and at the ends of the base, Achilles on one side and Memnon on the other. Its placement along and facing the southern path into the Altis, with its back against the Bouleuterion used by the Eleans for their assemblies and by Olympic athletes who swore their oath in front of a statue of Zeus Horkios, is strategic. The warriors, presumably armed and standing in active postures, were not actively fighting. Nonetheless, the impressive, numerous, bronze, over life-size figures at this place would have had a dramatic impact on the visitor.

The Achaean Monument, dating just after 480 BC,<sup>66</sup> stood directly in front of the temple of Zeus on its southeast side, near the later *Nike* of Paionios (Figs. 8.2, 8.3, 8.6, 8.10). Like the Apollonian Monument, it used the theme of the Trojan War as the subject of its over life-size, free-standing bronze figures on a long, curved base. Pausanias (5.25.8–10) and the extant remains indicate that the monument depicted nine Achaean heroes drawing lots from Nestor's helmet to determine who would meet Hektor in single combat (see *Iliad* 7.161ff.), with the solitary figure of Nestor standing and holding the helmet on a base 6.55 m away from and opposite them. The inscription, according to Pausanias (5.25.10), read: 'To Zeus, these images were dedicated by the Achaeans, descendants of Pelops, the godlike descendant of Tantalos.' The occasion for the erection of this dedication is unknown, but I think it likely that it was a military victory monument, considering its theme, size, prominence, placement and expense, and the fact that

*spätarchaischer und klassischer Zeit* (Munich: tuduv, 1997), pp. 92–7, 243–55, who also offers a reconstruction of the group; Eckstein, *ANAΘHMATA*, pp. 15–22.

65 The inscription, on Parian marble, was published by E. Kunze, 'Inscripfen', *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 5 (1956), pp. 149–53.

66 A. Ajootian, 'Heroic and athletic sortition at Olympia', in G. P. Schaus and S. R. Wenn (eds), *Onward to the Olympics: Historical Perspectives on the Olympic Games* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), pp. 115–29, relates the monument to the selection of lane positions for athletes at Olympia; Ioakimidou, *Statuenreihen*, p. 83, dates it c.460–450 BC, and see also the discussion on pp. 82–7, 213–25.



Figure 8.10 Olympia, Altis, foundation of the Achaean Monument, c.480–475 BC.

the warriors were armed, according to Pausanias.<sup>67</sup> The monument, with its over life-size bronze warriors, would have resonated with the armour and *tropaia* dedicated all around the sanctuary. Because of the sizeable distance between the two portions of the monument, it is safe to assume that the viewer was intended to walk between them, to become a part of this ensemble. In any case, we can note that at least for the Apollonian Monument, the choice of heroes and warriors from Greek myth to memorialize the victory of the Apollonians visually and thematically liken the contemporary, actual military victory and victors to those of the legendary past, thus exalting the Apollonian warriors to the heroic realm.<sup>68</sup>

In the case of the victory monuments, which can be precisely located, we can observe their clustering around the temple of Zeus, particularly towards its south or east end so as to be visible to visitors

67 See Ioakimidou, *Statuenreihen*, p. 216, who also believes it to be a victory monument.

68 Ibid., p. 219, suggests otherwise: that the ideal vantage point is one that encompasses both parts of the monument in one view.



entering the Altis along the main walkway and walking to the temple's east entrance side. Entering the Altis at the end of the fifth century BC, seeing the enormous temple, hundreds of monuments of victorious athletes and military victors, and glittering trophaia, would have been an awe-inspiring experience. The message, echoed by the Nikai akroteria atop the temple of Zeus, was victory on the racing track and on the battlefield, and it was Zeus who was to be thanked for it.

# ZEUS IN AESCHYLUS: THE FACTOR OF MONETIZATION

*Richard Seaford*

## 1 THE GODS IN TRAGEDY

It is often emphasized that we must be careful to avoid seeing the Greek gods through Christian spectacles. But the emphasis has, I suggest, itself often distorted our view. Here, for instance, in an influential paper on the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, is E. R. Dodds:

We cannot hope to understand Greek literature if we persist in looking at it through Christian spectacles. To the Christian it is a necessary part of piety to believe that God is just. And so it was to Plato and the Stoics. But the older world saw no such necessity. If you doubt this, take down the *Iliad* and read Achilles' opinion of what divine justice amounts to (24. 525–33); or take down the Bible and read the Book of Job.<sup>1</sup>

But what is this supposedly decisive opinion of Achilles? That Zeus has two urns, from which he distributes to men either a mixture of sorrows and blessings or mere sorrows. This idea, which occurs only this once in Homer, does not in fact exclude the possibility that Zeus upholds justice and punishes injustice. True, the Homeric Zeus does not on the whole have such a role, at least as far as our conception of justice is concerned. But what has been ignored until recently is that he and other gods have a strong sense of the reciprocal obligation imposed on them by (especially) animal sacrifices, even if they are sometimes unable to fulfil it.<sup>2</sup> And we will be less inclined to dismiss

1 'On misunderstanding the *Oedipus Rex*', in his *The Ancient Concept of Progress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 64–77 at 76.

2 See esp. *Il.* 4.48–9, 8.201–4, 20.297–9, 22.170–2; *Od.* 1.59–67, and the excellent discussion by R. Parker 'Pleasing thighs: reciprocity in Greek religion', in C. Gill et al. (eds), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 105–25.

this sense of interpersonal obligation as morally marginal when we register its great importance – when compared to state institutions or abstract principle – between Homeric mortals. The coherence of Homeric society owes much to the code of interpersonal reciprocity.

Dodds was wrong not only in separating all justice from deity in the ‘older world’, but also in supposing that the gods of tragedy are those of the ‘older world’. The world of tragedy is not one characterized by gods who are, as in Homer, unwilling to see those mortals suffer who have piously sacrificed to them. Rather, the sacrifices that occur in tragic plots are generally perverted, as instruments of intra-familial conflict. And at the heart of several tragic plots is the failure to acknowledge the deity, whether by refusing to make offerings or in some other way. As instances of refusal, Euripides’ *Bacchae* and *Hippolytos* spring to mind, as well as the moment at which, in Aeschylus’ *Septem* (700–4), the fratricide becomes inevitable in the frenzied declaration of Eteokles that there is no point in sacrificing to the gods. True, there are a few Homeric instances of mortals omitting to sacrifice,<sup>3</sup> but the omission is briefly stated and unmotivated – except that in one case it is because ‘he forgot, or did not think of it’ (*Il.* 9. 537). In our tragic instances, by contrast, the omission is deliberate, and is central both to the identity of the mortal and to the plot.

Another mode of not recognizing deity is exemplified in the boast of Ajax that he will win military glory without the help of the gods and in his specific rejection of the help offered by Athena (Sophocles, *Ajax* 767–75). By thus angering Athena, he causes his own downfall. Oedipus too, albeit in the sphere of intelligence, boasts of his autonomy in solving the riddle of the Sphinx. Whereas the seer Teiresias had nothing to offer from the birds or ‘known from the gods’, he, Oedipus, ‘stopped’ the Sphinx ‘by intelligence (*gnōmēi*), not learning from the birds’. Whereas such a victory is in mythology normally achieved by a hero with divine support, Oedipus acknowledges no such support but ascribes the victory to his own unaided intelligence. True, no explicit connection is made here (as it is in *Ajax*) between pride and downfall; but it is surely not coincidental that the two Sophoclean heroes who combine supreme success with pride in their individual independence are also the only two destroyed by the gods alone (without the help of mortals). The solitary but supremely successful violence of Herakles is followed by the same kind of fate in Euripides’ *Herakles*, and by divinely willed destruction (albeit through the (unwitting) act of a mortal) in Sophocles’ *Trachiniai*.

3 *Il.* 7.450, 9.534–5, 12.6, 23.863–4; *Od.* 4.352.

The tragedies mentioned so far are those, or at least among those, in which we most feel the ruthless cruelty of the gods. And in some of them – *Ajax*, *Hippolytos*, *Herakles*, *Bacchae* – we may also look askance at the *personal* (rather than principled) motivation of the deity. It is as if the selfish wilfulness of the Homeric gods has produced, in tragedy, a new dimension of suffering. But this pessimistic vision, unimpeded – we may proudly declare – by Christian spectacles, sees only a small part of a large picture that was entirely absent from Homer. The divine crushing of a new kind of mortal individual independence goes with the transition to communal well-being. All the tragedies that we have mentioned (except *Oedipus Tyrannus*) either prefigure a communal cult or end with instructions for its actual foundation.<sup>4</sup> If the behaviour of tragic gods is individualistic, it nevertheless belongs to the transition from the imagined individualism of the heroic age to the communal cults of the polis.

The Homeric individualism of the gods in these four tragedies was enhanced by their visible presence: Aphrodite and Artemis in *Hippolytos*, Athena in *Ajax*, Dionysos in *Bacchae*, and Iris and Lyssa (as agents of Hera) in *Herakles*. The god who presides over tragedy, Dionysos, is one of the most visibly present in the polis. His image was brought in procession to the theatre, where it stayed for the performances. In the one surviving tragedy in which he appears (*Bacchae*), he participates centrally in the action (albeit in disguise for the most part), and interacts directly with the mortals, to a degree unparalleled in any other extant tragedy except for the all-deity *Prometheus Vincitus* and the full participation of Apollo, Athena and the Furies in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.<sup>5</sup> True, in a majority of extant tragedies gods appear on stage, but generally in the more remote roles of setting the scene in the prologue or bringing the action to a conclusion *ex machina* at the end.

Dionysos in *Bacchae* appears in person to establish his cult in Thebes and to destroy Pentheus for rejecting it, but in the ending, when criticized for his excessive anger, replies that 'long ago my father Zeus approved these things' (1349). Zeus has played no part in the action, but the appeal to his authority creates a sense of finality. Similarly at

4 R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

5 Elsewhere in extant tragedy (except Athena conversing with Odysseus and Ajax in the prologue of *S. Ajax*) the participation by a deity is less extensive and more remote. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), pp. 459–511, argues for a progressive diminution of direct interaction between gods and men, but oddly ignores *Bacchae* (the priest is after all Dionysos in disguise), which I suggest represents in this respect early tragedy on Dionysiac themes.

the end of *Hippolytos* Artemis reveals that it was through fear of Zeus that she could not prevent the killing of Hippolytos (1331). And at the end of *Eumenides* Athena indicates that the new order depends on the power of Zeus, whose victory it is. Gods and goddesses visible here in the theatre appeal to the remote but powerful authority of the ruler of the universe. Even in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, to return to another of our selected tragedies, the conclusion seems willed by a remote Zeus (1023, 1168, 1278).

In Homer too Zeus, in contrast to some other deities, remains physically remote from mortals, and has something like omnipotence. But there are significant differences between the Homeric and the tragic Zeus. Whereas in Homer Zeus has a participatory presence in the action, even to the point of being seduced by Hera, there is no certain case of his visible presence on the tragic stage (I will shortly come to what is by far the most likely case). In Homer he is impressively anthropomorphic: 'he nodded his head with the dark brows, and the ambrosial hair of the king swept from his divine head' (*Il.* 1.528–30), words which were said to have inspired Pheidias' famous statue of Zeus at Olympia.<sup>6</sup> But there is no evidence that the tragedians were similarly inspired. In what we know of tragedy there is no description of his appearance.

Even in the descriptions in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* of the sexual contact between Zeus and the bovine Io, there is no reference to Zeus' appearance beyond the fact that he had the form of a bull. The contact itself is described in terms of 'breathing', 'touch', mixing', 'healing' and 'benign violence'.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, attention to the tauromorphism of Zeus would combine oddly, in the same play, with the Zeus whose mind has no boundaries (1049) and who effortlessly carries out his thought, all of him (*empas*), while sitting in the same place (96–103). And yet the odd combination does occur, on a corrupt papyrus that may well be from Aeschylus' *Carians or Europa* (fr. 99 Radt). Europa is describing her rape by the tauromorphic Zeus.

An all-feeding meadow gave hospitality to the bull. Such was the effortless theft of me from my aged father that Zeus perpetrated, remaining where he was.

We are almost left with the impression that the bull is merely the *agent* of Zeus.

Quite different from the Homeric anthropomorphism of Zeus is

6 For the statue see Lapatin, this volume, Chapter 7, pp. 144–5; Barringer, this volume, Chapter 8, esp. Fig. 8.1.

7 Lines 44–5, 171, 295, 301, 313, 576, 1065–7.

this Aeschylean Zeus who effortlessly carries out his thought without moving. He resembles rather the Zeus of Xenophanes,<sup>8</sup> as well as the Zeus who in the Derveni papyrus is equated with mind co-extensive with the universe. Whereas Homeric Zeus shakes *Olympos* with his *nod* (*Il.* 1.528–30), Xenophanes' god 'shakes *all things* by the *thought of his mind*' (B 25 DK). As ubiquitous mind, Zeus remains personal but has become non-anthropomorphic and abstract (and so invisible). In a fragment (55 Radt) of Aeschylus 'Zeus (is) *aithēr*, Zeus (is) earth, Zeus (is) sky. Zeus is all things, and whatever is higher than these.' On this Lloyd-Jones, who like Dodds sees the tragic gods as belonging to the old order, comments

For Aeschylus, as for Homer, Zeus is supreme above all other gods; and it is hardly unnatural that he should express this by saying that Zeus is equivalent in his own person to upper earth, air and sky.<sup>9</sup>

But there is a radical difference between *ruling over all other gods* and *being the entire physical universe*. Zeus in this fragment is non-anthropomorphic and co-extensive with the universe, like ubiquitous mind, but is also concrete and impersonal.

It is – paradoxically – in drama, in which we see the action before us, that Zeus is sometimes ubiquitous and yet invisible. In *Suppliant Women* this paradox is intensified by his sexual activity. What is its meaning and its dramatic effect?

The Danaids have been pursued from Egypt to Greece by male sexual desire, rather as their ancestress Io, with whom they seem to identify, was pursued from Greece to Egypt by a gadfly as a result of the sexual desire of Zeus. As patriarch, Zeus is on the one hand associated with the sexual suffering of women, but on the other hand is the cosmic authority in whom the Danaids invest their hopes for a good conclusion. Such a conclusion may well have been a new dispensation reached at the end of the trilogy, after Aphrodite's (surviving) praise of sexual reproduction, and was probably prefigured by, for instance, the Danaids' positive evaluation, at the very end of *Suppliant Women*, of Zeus' sexual contact with Io: 'he who freed Io from pain well detaining her with healing hand, making violence benign' (1064–9).

8 For Xenophanes see esp. B 14, B 23, B 24, B 25, B 26 DK; W. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 379–83; R. Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 211–12.

9 H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley and London: University of California University Press, 1971), p. 86.

But I cannot take this any further here. I will rather emphasize two features of this tragic Zeus. One is his embodiment of *transition*. For instance, the Danaid trilogy may in its overall movement have resembled the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, in which Zeus is remote from the action, gives his daughter Persephone in marriage to Hades, but must eventually sanction a new dispensation obtained by female rejection of the conditions of the marriage. We have seen how in tragedy Zeus provides final sanction to transitions enforced by other deities, as if those outcomes had to be guaranteed in a systematic universe. In all these cases, including the *Homeric Hymn*, the transitions are from the sufferings of great individuals to a permanent benefit for the community. Tragic deity frequently embodies the transcendent power needed to resolve, in favour of the polis but beyond controversy, the conflict of the polis with the autonomous household.

The other feature of Zeus I select for emphasis involves a broad methodological point. Where does the abstract (invisible) ubiquitous Zeus of *Suppliant Women* come from? As an answer from within the drama, I would suggest that the appeal to the unlimited mind and power of an eternal and ubiquitous abstract Zeus to provide a good conclusion can be related to the Danaids' rejection of any temporal or spatial limit to their current flight from marriage. This is not the place to demonstrate this in detail, and it would anyway not answer our question, for it illustrates the dramatic deployment of a pre-existing conception of Zeus rather than accounting for the conception.

It may seem obvious that conceptions of deity derive in large part from social processes, but it is a principle generally ignored in the study of ancient Greek religion. In Homer positive interpersonal reciprocity is more important to social cohesion than is the polis, and is accordingly projected onto Homeric immortals. There are in Homer virtually no polis cults for the gods to be concerned with, and their approval of animal sacrifices is as channels for the receipt of human offerings (i.e. within the code of interpersonal reciprocity). When – unusually – one of them (Apollo) does express displeasure at the non-performance of ritual (death ritual for Hektor), this is in fact quite different from such divine displeasure and the consequent pollution in Sophocles' *Antigone*, for Apollo begins by reproaching the gods for allowing such a thing to happen to a man who had given them animal sacrifices (*Il.* 24.33–5), and Zeus, in expressing agreement, reiterates the point (68–70).

In tragedy, conversely, divine concern with the transition from individual suffering to polis cult goes with neglect of positive interpersonal reciprocity. An extreme case is in Sophocles' *Trachiniai*: Herakles in agony invokes Zeus as he complains of the cruel *charis*

(reciprocal good will, favour) he has received from the altars that he was dedicating to Zeus when he put on the garment that is destroying him (Sophocles, *Trachiniai* 752–6, 993–6). Correspondingly, between mortals in tragedy interpersonal reciprocity is frequently violated, and in the form of gift-giving is generally disastrous.<sup>10</sup>

In fifth-century Athens interpersonal reciprocity as a form of social cohesion remained important, but had been relatively marginalized by the institutions and cults of the polis, as well as by the rapid progress – from about the middle of the sixth century – of the first ever all-pervasive *monetization* in human history. In a word, I regard the abstract and ubiquitous Zeus, in Aeschylus and elsewhere, as a synthesis of the traditional conception of Zeus with the cosmic projection of something historically entirely unprecedented, the ubiquitous near-omnipotence of abstract monetary value. The closely interrelated developments of polis-formation and monetization are both crucial factors shaping the gods of tragedy.

## 2 THE SCALES OF ZEUS

After these brief generalizations, I now focus on a specific passage. I propose a new interpretation of the conception of Zeus in Aeschylus' famous Hymn to Zeus (*Agamemnon* 160–83), in the course of which the effect of monetization on tragedy will be illustrated. Here is the first of the three stanzas of the Hymn.

Zeus, whoever he is, if to be called by this name is pleasing to him, thus do I address him. I am unable to liken (*ouk echō proseikasai*) him to anything (or anything to him), putting everything on the scales (*pant' epistathmōmenos*),<sup>11</sup> except Zeus, if from my mind I am to throw off genuinely (*etētumōs*) the vain weight.

Central to the understanding of this passage are three considerations, not one of which has been pointed out in any of the commentaries.

The first is that it is influenced by the divine scales in the *Iliad* that are operated by Zeus and determine victory in battle.<sup>12</sup> They were adopted by Aeschylus as a central theme in his (lost) *Psychostasia*, and are invoked at critical moments in his *Suppliants* (403, 405, 823).

10 E. Belfiore, 'Harming friends: problematic reciprocity in Greek tragedy', in Gill et al., *Reciprocity*, pp. 139–58; Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual*, pp. 389–95.

11 The verb *episthāmōmai* occurs nowhere else. But cf. Ar. *Lys.* 797 *talantōi mousikē stathmēsetai*. In the fifth century BC *stathmon* means a weight, and *stathmos* can mean (among other things) a weight or scales.

12 *Il.* 8.69–72; 14.99; 16.658; 19.223–4; 22.209–19.



The second is that the context of this invocation in *Agamemnon* is precisely appropriate for the evocation of divine scales. It interrupts a narrative – of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia at Aulis<sup>13</sup> – that is structured to emphasize *opposition between equal forces*. The omen that appeared to the Atreidai as they set out for Troy, of eagles ‘sacrificing’ a pregnant hare, is ambivalent. Every word of it could equally refer to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia.<sup>14</sup> And it is interpreted by the seer Kalchas as ‘favourable on the one hand, inauspicious on the other’ (*dexia men katamompha de*). For it prefigures the fall of Troy, but may demand ‘the other’<sup>15</sup> sacrifice’ (of Iphigeneia), which will create future conflict. ‘Such things’, conclude the chorus, ‘did Kalchas cry out with blessings as fated for the royal house from the birds on the way. In consonance therewith say woe, woe, but may the good prevail’ (159 *ailinon ailinon eipe, to d’ eu nikatō*).

Now it is at this very moment, in which the emphasized ambivalence of the omen itself as well as of Kalchas’ utterance (‘with blessings’) is reproduced (‘in consonance’) in the liturgical syntax of the refrain,<sup>16</sup> that the chorus breaks off the narrative to invoke Zeus and his divine scales. It is as if the human crisis of equally opposed forces (equilibrium) requires one side of the divine scales to fall. In *Suppliants*, where we have seen an abstract and ubiquitous Zeus, it is as Pelasgos is faced with the dilemma of whether or not to defend the Danaids<sup>17</sup> that the Danaids refer to Zeus’ power to incline the scales (402–6); and it is at the other crisis of the play, the point of the arrival of the aggressive Aigyptiads, that the Danaids appeal to Zeus: ‘yours altogether is the beam of the scales’ (823).<sup>18</sup> In Homer, the Hymn to Zeus, and *Suppliants* it is in a crisis, with things ‘in the balance’, that there is recourse to the power of Zeus to incline the scales.

The third consideration is more complex, and requires careful analysis of the invocation itself. We move from the traditional doubt about the nature of the deity being addressed to the idea that he is

13 For the sacrifice see J. N. Bremmer, ‘Sacrificing a child in ancient Greece: the case of Iphigeneia’, in E. Noort and E. J. C. Tigchelaar (eds), *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 21–43.

14 Ambivalent are *autotokon* (‘with its offspring’ or ‘his own offspring’), *pro lochou* (‘before birth’ or ‘before the army’), *ptaka* (‘hare’ or ‘cowering’): W. B. Stanford, *Ambiguity in Greek Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939), pp. 143–4.

15 *Heteran*, always mistranslated as ‘an other’. It goes with the ambivalence of the description of the eagles’ sacrifice.

16 Repeated from 121 and 139.

17 ‘I am at a loss, and fear holds my mind, whether to act or not to act’ (379–80).

18 Elsewhere in Aeschylus reference to the inclination of scales is in some cases merely metaphorical (*Pers.* 437, 440, *Su.* 605, 982, *Ag.* 349, 574, 707, 1042, 1272, *Cho.* 61, 240, *Eum.* 888). In other cases, in which the scales are inclined by a deity other than Zeus (*Pers.* 345–6, *Sept.* 21, *Ag.* 251, cf. *Cho.* 61), we seem – as sometimes happens in Aeschylus – to be somewhere between metaphor and cosmology.

incomparable to anything else,<sup>19</sup> and then – with the idea of weighing – to the impossibility of *equivalence*. And so *proseikasai* turns out to mean not so much ‘liken to’ as ‘regard as equivalent to’.<sup>20</sup> And so the meaning of the whole passage can be brought out thus:

Even if I put all things on the scales, they are not equivalent to Zeus. For he outweighs all things, is beyond equivalence. That is, the only thing equivalent to him is himself – if I am to throw off the weight of anxious thought: it is only Zeus who can outweigh (raise) the weight of my anxiety.

This is similar to the Homeric idea of Zeus inclining the scales. In two passages of the *Iliad* (*Il.* 8.69–72, 22.209–19) the fall of one side of the divine scales is caused by the (respective weights of) the two fates put on the scales by Zeus. In another (19.223–4) it is caused by Zeus himself (*klinēisi*). But in Aeschylus the manner in which Zeus inclines one side is even less clear: all we are told is that he is beyond equivalence with all things that might be put on the scales. That he is imagined as sufficiently heavy or powerful to raise all such things on the scales seems absurd. The conception is surely more abstract. But what is it? Were the answer obvious, then the commentators would have recognized that we have to do with scales.

### 3 ABSTRACT VALUE

The answer is not obvious, but with it everything falls into place. This conception of Zeus has been consciously or unconsciously

19 There are accordingly none of the epithets, names or indications of the god’s nature that are usually found along with the formula of doubt: examples and discussion in S. Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 96–115.

20 It can certainly have this latter meaning. To *ouk echō proseikasai* there is nothing similar in Greek literature, except for the almost identical *ouk echō eikasai* (in the optative *ouk echoim’ an eikasai*) in the next play of the very same trilogy. Orestes says of the libations offered by Clytemnestra to the dead Agamemnon (*Cho.* 518) *ouk echoim’ an eikasai tade ta dōra* (*ta dōra* should perhaps rather go with what follows, but this does not affect my point). This is universally understood to mean ‘I do not know what to compare the offerings to.’ But this would have no point whatsoever. What it means is ‘I would not regard the offerings as equivalent.’ This simple and relevant point is then explained in Orestes’ next words: ‘They (the offerings) are less than the offence. For even if someone were to pour out all things (*panta*) in exchange for (*anti*) one bloodshed, it would not work.’ That is why (a fortiori) there is no *equivalence* between Clytemnestra’s offerings and the blood shed. Similarly, putting all things (*panta*) on the scales is not *equivalent* to Zeus. *Eikazein* could mean to estimate quantity or weight: *PSI* 5. 522; *P. Gurob* 8. 14: both third century BC. Cf. *Eur. El.* 559 (numismatic).

influenced by the perceived omnipotence of *abstract monetary value*. This omnipotence, favoured by the invention and rapid spread of coinage, was a recent phenomenon in the polis of Aeschylus' time. I have elsewhere argued in detail that it was a vital factor in the genesis of the Presocratic ideas of the divine as all-pervasive, semi-abstract substance, and in the genesis and content of Athenian tragedy.<sup>21</sup> Here I extend the argument to include the Zeus of Aeschylus.

The scales, though operated by a person, may in pre-monetary societies be the main instrument for the *impersonal* regulation of exchange. And so their social authority may be projected onto the cosmos, as in Egypt, which may have influenced the Greek cosmic scales.<sup>22</sup> However, with the advent of coined money, the impersonal regulation and control of exchange seems to be performed by – above all – abstract value. Commodities are still of course weighed, but now so as to ascertain their abstract value. This abstract value is new and mysterious. It is embodied above all in coins, which do not need to be weighed. It is a single (homogeneous) thing, and yet all the commodities that you may put on the scales will not outweigh it. Along with this startling characteristic, it is also omnipotent.<sup>23</sup> And so it is easily imagined as divine, or rather the traditional idea of (divine) omnipotence is easily influenced by it. In our passage of *Agamemnon* the overall power of Zeus is still imagined as the power to incline scales, but has been influenced by the transcendent power of abstract value.

The passage embodies a synthesis of two distinct instruments of evaluation. The same synthesis – of the traditional omnipotence of the Homeric scales with the new omnipotence of money – is differently expressed a little later in the same play, in the image of Ares at Troy as 'gold-changer of bodies, and holding the scales in the battle' (437–9). In exchange for bodies he gives mere dust: cremation is overlaid with the monetized exchange of large for small (gold dust), with the implication that even war is fought for omnipotent money.<sup>24</sup>

21 R. Seaford, 'Tragic money', *JHS* 118 (1998), pp. 119–39, and *Money and the Early Greek Mind*.

22 B. C. Dietrich, 'The judgement of Zeus', *Rheinisches Museum* 107 (1964), pp. 97–125; A. Setaiolo, 'L'immagine delle bilance e il giudizio dei morti', *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 44 (1972), pp. 38–54.

23 Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, pp. 162–5, 214–16.

24 For the familiarity of the idea to Aeschylus' audience see Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, p. 158.

#### 4 ABSTRACTION AND THE MIND

The synthesis of old with new is also of concrete with abstract. The concrete Homeric scales are, in the Hymn to Zeus, inclined by a Zeus who has become, at least in part (as influenced by monetary value), *abstract*. He is accordingly beyond equivalence with all *concrete* things, and capable of outweighing the *mental* weight of anxiety. In Homer the (concrete) *kēres* of the warriors are put in the scales, and the victor is he whose *kēr* is the lighter.<sup>25</sup> But in Aeschylus' *Psychostasia* it is *souls* that are put on the scales. It may have been in this play that the paradoxical idea of mental (and so invisible) weight inclining the scales was born, to be then given new sense (weight as abstract value) in our Hymn to Zeus. It is also the only tragedy for which there is good (albeit disputed)<sup>26</sup> evidence for the visible presence of Zeus. The power of Zeus may be imagined as abstract and universal, like that of money, and so invisible or remote. And so it is significant that even in the *Psychostasia*, although Zeus does (probably) for once make an (anthropomorphic) appearance, his power was not imagined as anthropomorphic. Rather it was visibly expressed through, or subordinated to, an impersonal instrument of commerce.

Invisible ubiquity (even to the point of uniting all things into itself) is a power that seems to attach to monetary value, to post-Homeric deity, and to the post-Homeric *mind*. And between these three similar constructions there is mutual influence. Because I have argued this elsewhere, I confine myself here to a single illustration. The Derveni commentator cites Orphic verses in which everything is absorbed into Zeus, and comments that

in saying this he makes clear that mind (*nous*) itself being alone is always worth everything (*pantōn axios*), as if all else were nothing. For it would not be possible for the present things to exist, if they were without the mind.<sup>27</sup>

#### 5 DIVINE DIFFERENTIATION OF THE UNITY OF OPPOSITES

The equilibrium of opposed forces at Aulis that prompts the Hymn to Zeus embodies the tendency of Aeschylus, especially in the *Agamemnon*

25 *Il.* 8.69; 22.212; cf. 14.99; 16.658; *kēr* is sometimes translated 'doom'.

26 Compare O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 431–3, with Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*, pp. 463–4.

27 Column xvi.9–12, ed. Kouromenos et al. Cf. Pythermos (sixth-century Ionian): 'the things other than gold were after all nothing' (PMG 910).

and *Choephoroi*, to see the world as pervaded by the unity or confusion of opposites. From numerous examples I select at random the description of the storm that destroyed the returning Greek fleet as a conspiracy of enemies, fire and sea (*Ag.* 650–1), or Agamemnon walking on the textile as a Greek being treated as a barbarian, a man as a woman, a mortal as a god (*Ag.* 918–25). This unity or confusion of opposites is dangerous. For a good outcome opposites must be differentiated.

The crisis of equally opposed forces at Aulis is also the beginning of the cycle of violent revenge: the eagles' ambivalent sacrifice requires 'the other' sacrifice of Iphigeneia that will in turn require the sacrifice of Agamemnon. And indeed the violent cycle continues to unite opposites. Each killing is an act of justice that is also (from the view of the victim) injustice, and the outcome is that 'justice clashes with justice' (*Cho.* 461). Each act of revenge is strikingly identical with its predecessor.<sup>28</sup> And so the way to end the cycle is to differentiate the killings<sup>29</sup> – in a trial that also produces the related differentiation (and reconciliation) of male and female, Olympian and chthonic. Athena refers to the trial as 'separating this affair genuinely' (*Eum.* 488). 'Genuinely' here is *etētumōs*, which was used of raising the weight of anxiety on the divine scales, and should perhaps be translated 'definitively'.

The unity of opposites is a crisis in which they must be differentiated so as to be reconciled. Such differentiation requires divine intervention. It is Athena who as an intermediary between the opposites establishes the law court to differentiate (and reconcile) them. To say that 'god gave power to every middle (*meson*)' (*Eum.* 530) is to affirm a divine origin for the third (middle) entity by which universally opposites are reconciled. This is a Pythagorean belief.<sup>30</sup> The crisis of equilibrium at Aulis prompts resort to the Zeus who as a third party differentiates the equilibrium between opposites by inclining the scales.

## 6 HERACLITUS AND PYTHAGOREANISM

The pervasion of the cosmos by the unity of opposites is an idea associated also with Aeschylus' contemporary Heraclitus, for whom it is illustrated and embodied in the bow and the lyre, instruments as simple as the scales.<sup>31</sup> Heraclitus and Aeschylus are contemporaries,

28 As in the balanced and identical language used to describe successive acts of revenge at *Cho.* 310–4.

29 They are 'not the same thing': *Eum.* 625.

30 R. Seaford, *Cosmology and the Polis: The Social Construction of Space and Time in the Tragedies of Aeschylus* (forthcoming), ch. 18.

31 B 51 DK *harmonia* is 'backward-stretching, as of bow and lyre'.

and their cosmologies are in my view both profoundly affected by monetization. But there are two important cosmological differences between them, both of which can be related to the difference that whereas Heraclitus seems to have distanced himself from the polis and its religious practices,<sup>32</sup> Aeschylus dramatizes myth in a polis festival.

The first difference is the obvious one that – despite our instances of a semi-abstract Zeus – the gods in Aeschylus remain for the most part personal, even anthropomorphic. The cosmos of Heraclitus, which he describes as an ever-living fire, seems to have no place for personal deity, at least beyond what is implied by a remark such as that ‘One, the only wise, does and does not wish to be called by the name of Zeus’ (B 32 DK). We may note in passing that this remark also adapts the traditional expression of doubt (about how to address a deity) to express a new conception of Zeus as a mental entity, and in this respect resembles Aeschylus’ Hymn to Zeus.

The other difference between Aeschylus and Heraclitus is more complex. For both thinkers the unity of opposites pervades the cosmos. But for Aeschylus we have seen that it is dangerous, and so it must – for the sake of permanent well-being – be transcended. A simple example is from the *Oresteia*: violence produces counter-violence in a cycle that seems (given that each violent act is indistinguishable from its predecessor) unstoppable. But whereas for Heraclitus *harmonia* inheres in opposition (B 51 DK) and the cosmic process of elements being transformed into their opposites is eternal, we have seen that the *Oresteia* moves from the unity of opposites in unceasing conflict (as found also in Heraclitus) to the mediation of opposites by a third party that produces a permanent solution to conflict. This latter idea is characteristic of Pythagoreanism, which accordingly privileges the third or middle (*meson*) in the construction of the cosmos.<sup>33</sup>

I will develop this point by returning to the depersonalization of deity. What might be the point of an impersonal Zeus in drama? I will confine myself here to the Hymn to Zeus. The crisis of equilibrium gives rise, in the way I have described, to the notion of Zeus inclining the cosmic scales. These scales are the only impersonal agent of divine power in Homer, as well as being – as scales – associated with commerce and so with monetary value. Moreover, the crisis of equilibrium produces a mental burden, and the *Psychostasia* provided a precedent for the idea of mental (invisible) weight inclining the scales. All this conspires to make a receptive context for the accommodation of a

32 Politics: Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, pp. 184–5. Religion: Heraclitus B 5, B 14, B 15 DK.

33 Seaford, *Cosmology and the Polis*, ch. 18.

mighty power that – because invisible and ubiquitous – was likely to be imagined as divine, the power of money.<sup>34</sup>

But that is not all that the context reveals. The next stanza is as follows.

He who before was great,  
swelling with the boldness of all kinds of fighting,  
will not even be mentioned as previously existing.  
And he who next came into being  
met his *triaktēr* and is gone.  
Anyone who with good will shouts Zeus in victory-song  
will obtain understanding completely.

Ouranos was violently displaced as ruler of the cosmos by Kronos, who was violently displaced by Zeus. The word *triaktēr*, besides meaning the victor in wrestling by virtue of three throws,<sup>35</sup> cannot here fail to evoke the third place in the cosmic succession. On the one hand this is a cosmogony that is presented as a third element supervening on two opposed elements, an idea redolent of early Pythagoreanism. Also redolent of Pythagoreanism are the word *triaktēr*<sup>36</sup> and the invocation, frequent in the trilogy, of Zeus the ‘third’.<sup>37</sup> But on the other hand Zeus, and the new impersonal omnipotence of money projected onto him in the first stanza, is *re-personalized* as a wrestler (albeit of cosmic significance). He is then, in the third and final stanza, described as ‘he who put mortals on the road to understanding, who made *pathei mathos* (learning by suffering) a rule’ (176–8). Whereas in the first stanza mental anxiety is outweighed by Zeus, in the second and third it is a mental state (understanding) that flows from his victory.

And so the Zeus who emerges from the Hymn combines anthropomorphic victory and benevolence towards humankind with the universal power that Greeks of the fifth century could not fail to

34 Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, ch. 8.

35 Cf. *Cho.* 339 (and 1076); *Eum.* 589. Thomson in his commentary compares the wrestling contest between Kronos and Zeus at Olympia (Paus. 5.7.10, 8.2.2).

36 See e.g. Aristotle, *de Caelo* 268a10; Philolaos 44 B 1, B 6 DK; Pl. *Tim.* 31bc. Ion of Chios (36 B 1–4 DK), who produced drama at Athens and knew Aeschylus personally, wrote a work of Pythagorean content, entitled *Triagmoi*, that began with the statement ‘all things are three’. The *triagmos* (a *hapax*) has been derived from the rare verb *triazō* or *triassō*, which refers to winning in wrestling (by virtue of three throws) and gives rise to *triaktēr* (also a *hapax*).

37 Seaford, *Cosmology and the Polis*, ch. 18; see esp. *Eum.* 758–60; Orestes, just acquitted, refers to his salvation as ‘by the will of Pallas and of Loxias and of the third Saviour who completes all things (*tou panta krainontos tritou Sōtēros*)’; cf. Philochoros *FrGH* 328 F 87.

sense in abstract monetary value. Impersonal omnipotence, required by the chorus' anxiety at the pervasive crisis of united opposites, is accommodated in the first stanza and then in the second reassuringly re-personalized. Similarly, the Zeus invoked in the final words of the trilogy is as invisibly ubiquitous as it is possible to be while being a person: he is 'all-seeing' (*pantoptas*).

The crisis of equilibrium (the unity of opposites) at Aulis initiated – and continued into – the seemingly endless cycle of revenge that will be ended with Athena founding polis institutions and with the victory of Zeus (*Eum.* 974). The appeal to the Zeus who inclines the scales to end the crisis of equilibrium moves from the human unity of opposites to its divine differentiation, and so prefigures the overall movement of the trilogy. And then the chorus endows the differentiating role of Zeus with a *temporal* dimension, the irreversible differentiation of opposites into phases: in the second stanza he replaces the primeval succession of violent oppositions by permanent victory as third ruler, and in the third he creates the transition from suffering (*pathos*) to learning (*mathos*). And finally, at the end of the resumed Aulis narrative, the eventual transition from *pathos* to *mathos* is reinforced by the instant differentiation provided by the divine scales: 'Justice inclines the scales (*epirrhepei*) with learning (*mathein*) for the sufferers (*pathousin*)' (250–1).



## HEPHAISTOS SWEATS OR HOW TO CONSTRUCT AN AMBIVALENT GOD

*Jan N. Bremmer*

In a seminal 1978 article on Aphrodite and Persephone in Locri, the late Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1945–2007) broke new ground by raising the problem of the relationship between the local and Panhellenic persona of a Greek divinity.<sup>1</sup> However, this is only one aspect of Greek polytheism. In addition to the relationship between the local and Panhellenic persona, we also have to think about the relations between the various gods as they are reflected in the divine pecking order: which gods are more important than others and how we can distinguish these hierarchies.<sup>2</sup> By paying close attention to the ways the Greeks represented the divine hierarchy, we may gain insights into the manner in which they perceived and constructed their own human world. As a small contribution to this project I would like to offer some thoughts about Hephaistos, who is well known as a maker of important and beautiful objects (see below), but nevertheless was not a very important god in historical times. I will be mainly concerned with the manner in which the Greeks constructed his divine persona and the means by which they indicated his low status. We will conclude with some observations on possible inferences from this divine representation for a better understanding of his human worshippers.

Since the older studies by Malten, Wilamowitz and Delcourt,<sup>3</sup> the

For information I thank Graham Zanker and for helpful discussion I am grateful not only to Edinburgh audiences, but also to those in Reading (1999), Princeton (2000), Athens (2001), Wellington (NZ) and Harvard (2002), and Columbus, Ohio (2007).

1 See now C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *'Reading' Greek culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 147–88.

2 J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999<sup>2</sup>), pp. 14f.

3 L. Malten, 'Hephaistos', *JDAI* 27 (1912), pp. 232–64, and 'Hephaestus', in *RE* 8 (1913), pp. 311–66; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Kleine Schriften* V.2 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1937), pp. 5–35 ('Hephaistos'); M. Delcourt, *Héphaistos ou la légende du magicien* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1957).

god has not been totally neglected in recent times; witness the excellent lemma in *LIMC* as well as brief studies by Alan Shapiro and Fritz Graf;<sup>4</sup> but interest has not been booming, and a new contribution is not out of place. Let us start with the oldest evidence. Most scholars would probably begin with Homer and Hesiod, but in his excellent study of Indo-European poetry and myth Martin West has recently argued that divine craftsmen appear in several other Indo-European mythologies and that we should consider whether they reflect a common prototype. His conclusion is that the evidence for such a prototype is not strong, but that two motifs stand out in the evidence surveyed: 'the making by a special artificer of the chief god's distinctive weapon, and the craftsman god's association with the immortals' drinking'.<sup>5</sup> Both motifs are indeed present in Hephaistos' earliest traditions, and the presence of ancient, pre-Homeric roots cannot be excluded, as we will see shortly.

However, we move onto firmer ground when we turn to our oldest literary evidence, Homer and Hesiod, where we already find the basic ingredients of the god. We can perhaps systematize these into three aspects. First, Hephaistos is the god associated with fire, which is stereotyped as 'the flame of Hephaistos' (*Il.* 9.468; 23.33; *Od.* 24.71). He also uses fire to intervene in battle (*Il.* 21.328–82; *Hom. Hymn to Hermes* 115) and is even fire personified, as Plutarch much later noticed, illustrating the usage of the name Hephaistos both as power and as person with examples from Archilochus.<sup>6</sup> This association may have been more widespread than we perhaps think, since it was proverbial to say when fire crackled: 'Hephaistos laughs'.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, Hephaistos is the divine smith and builder. The latter aspect is somewhat surprising, but he constructed the rooms of his mother Hera (*Il.* 14.166–7) and father Zeus (14.338–9) as well as the houses of the individual gods (1.607–8), including that of himself, which was 'imperishable, decked with stars' and 'of bronze' (18.369–71). It may have been the handling of the latter metal

4 A. Hermary and A. Jacquemin, 'Hephaistos', in *LIMC* IV.1 (1988), pp. 627–54; H. A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens: Supplement* (Mainz: Von Zabern, 1995), pp. 1–14; F. Graf, 'Hephaistos', *Der neue Pauly* V (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998), pp. 352–6, updated in 'Hephaistos', in *Brill's New Pauly* 6 (2005), pp. 140–3. V. Maciadri, *Eine Insel im Meer der Geschichten: Untersuchungen zu Mythen aus Lemnos* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008), pp. 259–303, is better in collecting evidence than in interpreting it.

5 M. L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 154–7.

6 *Il.* 2.426, 9.468, 23.33; *Od.* 24.71; Plut. *Mor.* 23b, who compares Arch. fr. 9, 108 West<sup>2</sup>; note also Photius η 301 Theod.: 'Hephaistos: both the god and fire'.

7 Aristotle F 369a Rose<sup>3</sup>.

that made him into a builder, even though only his own home is described in any detail, but influence from the ancient Near East is more likely: the Ugaritic divine craftsman Kothar also has to build a palace for Yammu, the deified Sea.<sup>8</sup> Hephaistos is much more like the traditional smith with respect to other objects that he is credited with, such as the sceptre of Zeus (*Il.* 2.100–8), Diomedes' coat of mail (8.194–5), the weapons of Achilles (18.468–608), the handing over of which to Thetis was already represented on the Cypselus Chest (Paus. 5.19.8), the krater given by Menelaos to Telemachos (*Od.* 4.617), the spears of Peleus in the *Cypria* (F 3 Davies/Bernabé) and of Telemachos in the *Telegonia* (F 4 Bernabé), the vine that Zeus gave to Laomedon in compensation for the kidnapping of Ganymede (*Ilias Parva* 6.3 D = 29.3 B), the armour for Herakles (Hes. *Sc.* 123), the bronze amphora made for Dionysos, who gave it to Thetis, who in turn gave it to Achilles for the burial of his bones (*Od.* 24.75; Stesichorus F 234 Davies), the necklace that Zeus gave to Europa (Hesiod F 141 Merkelback/West) and, last and not least, the sickle with which the Titans cut off their father's genitals (Schol. Ap. Rhod. 4.982–92g). The motif of the supernatural maker of swords is widespread,<sup>9</sup> and we may perhaps surmise that such a claim was one of the ways to enhance the value of a valuable heirloom or to stress a sword's unique quality.

Hephaistos' connection with weapons remained alive in Athens until well into the Hellenistic period;<sup>10</sup> in fact, weapons were supposed to have been invented on Hephaistos' island, Lemnos.<sup>11</sup> In this area, Hephaistos clearly surpasses mortal smiths, since his own objects can look very much like living creatures, such as moving tripods (*Il.* 18.373–7), walking servants (18.417–21), shivering leaves of vines (Hes. *Sc.* 297), the guardian dogs of Alkinoos (*Od.* 7.91–4: a motif Homer also derived from the ancient Near East)<sup>12</sup> and the sharply

8 M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 57, 86, 384, 388–9; for connections between Ugarit and the Greek world see also G. Hoffman, *Imports and Immigrants: Near Eastern Contacts with Iron Age Crete* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 153–89; M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, 'Amurru, Yaman und die ägäischen Inseln nach den ugaritischen Texten', *Israel Oriental Studies* 18 (1998), pp. 335–62.

9 West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, pp. 461f.

10 *SEG* 26.98; 32.336, 351.

11 Hellanicus *FGH* 4 F 71b = F 71 b, \*c Fowler; Hsch. s.v. *Kabeiroi: karkinoi*; Tzetzes on Lyc. 227; B. Hemberg, *Die Kabiren* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1950), pp. 288–90.

12 C. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 18–35; West, *East Face of Helicon*, pp. 423f. Note also the epigram (third century BC) for Philetairos who even surpassed Hephaistos with his wondrous 'works' (*SEG* 38.776).

crying women in Hesiod's *Shield* (244).<sup>13</sup> As a smith, Hephaistos will, of course, live on for the rest of antiquity. Pytheas of Massilia even recorded the story that in former days people could leave unworked iron at Stromboli, where Hephaistos was supposed to have his subterranean smithy, and the next day they could collect their swords and pay for it.<sup>14</sup> A late funerary epigram from Pisidian Antioch for an anonymous smith still simply calls him a *technitês Hephaistou*.<sup>15</sup>

As a smith, Hephaistos is closely associated with the Lemnian Cabiri, local mythological metalworkers whose cult was also practised on the neighbouring islands of Imbros and Samothrace.<sup>16</sup> In fifth-century mythography they are represented as his children or grandchildren, and also epigraphically attested.<sup>17</sup> Although the Samothracian Cabirion postdates that of Lemnos, its later prominence has virtually wiped out all references to the Lemnian Cabiri, which perhaps explains the notice by Photius (κ 3 Theod.) that the Cabiri had fled the island because of the crime of the Lemnian women. However, the excavation of the Lemnian Cabirion at Chloi, not far from Hephaestia,<sup>18</sup> Aeschylus' tragedy *Cabiri*, and Hellanicus' notice that fire and weapons were invented on Lemnos (above, n. 11) well attest the one-time prominence of these enigmatic Lemnians and their 'high temple', the *celsa Cabirum delubra* of the Roman poet Accius' *Philoctetes* (*apud* Varro, *LL* 7.10 = fr. 2 Dangel). This combination of a divine group with a more important chief points to a pre-Greek

13 See also M. Pugliara, 'Le creature animate della fucina di Efesto: i cani, Talos e la Sirena', *Ostraka* 9 (2000), pp. 43–63, and *Il mirabile e l'artificio: Creature animate e semimoventi nel mito e nella tecnica degli antichi* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2003).

14 Schol. Ap. Rhod. 4.761–5a, quoted by West, *Indo-European Poetry*, p. 296.

15 *SEG* 33.1981; note also 42.273bis for a decree of a synodos of smiths regarding a lost statue of Hephaistos. For papyrological and epigraphical evidence of smiths see A. Bülow-Jacobsen, 'On smiths and quarries', in H. Machler et al. (eds), *Akten des 21. internationalen Papyrologenkongress Berlin, 13.–19.8.1995*, 2 vols (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner 1997), I, pp. 139–45, and G. Petzl, 'Addenda und corrigenda zu Ep. Anat. 30, 1998, 19–46', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 31 (1999) pp. 102–3, respectively.

16 Samothrace: Hemberg, *Kabiren*, pp. 73–81, whose scepticism is unfounded; cf. A. J. Graham, 'The colonization of Samothrace', *Hesperia* 71 (2002), pp. 231–60 at 249. Imbros: Hemberg, *Kabiren*, pp. 37–43. Lemnos: Hemberg, *Kabiren*, pp. 160–70; Maciadri, *Eine Insel im Meer der Geschichten*, pp. 331–44.

17 Mythography: Acusilaus *FGrH* 2 F 20 = 20 Fowler; Pherecydes *FGrH* 3 F 48; Hdt. 3.37; Hes. s.v. *Kabeiroi* (children). Epigraphy: *ASAA* III.4 (1948) 79–83, 105; *SEG* 45.1194.

18 For the Cabirion see most recently L. Beschi, 'Immagini dei cabiri di Lemno', in G. Capecchi et al. (eds), *In memoria di Enrico Paribeni*, 2 vols (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1998), I, pp. 45–59 (with bibliography of earlier publications), and 'Gli scavi del cabirio di Chloi', in *Un ponte fra l'Italia e la Grecia: Atti del simposio in onore di Antonino di Vita* (Padua: Ragusa, 2000), pp. 75–84 at 77–9.

background, such as we also find in Ionia and Caria, where the Cabiri are often connected with goddesses like Meter or Kybele.<sup>19</sup> The standing combination with Hephaistos is probably already a later, Greek-influenced stage, since tradition also reports a goddess, called Lemnos, as the mother of Cabiro and thus, most probably, the Lemnian representation of the pre-Greek Great Goddess.<sup>20</sup>

The number of the Cabiri varies, depending on the city or island where they were worshipped,<sup>21</sup> but in Lemnos they were considered to be a triad. Other archaic associations of blacksmiths also count several members. From the archaic epic poem *Phoronis* we know of three, five or even fifty Dactyls, and on Rhodes we have nine Telchines, nine being the typical number of an archaic Greek men's association.<sup>22</sup> These Greek numbers clearly have a symbolic value, which cannot be translated into precise archaic professional realities, but we may reasonably assume that the association of Hephaistos and the Cabiri reflected such a one-time group of blacksmiths on Lemnos. In that case, Panhellenic myth had selected him from a local group of blacksmiths for which it had no place. It would fit such an origin that Photius (κ 3 Theod.) explains the Lemnian Cabiri with the plural 'Hephaistoi', which may have been a local name under which Hephaistos and his children or grandchildren were known. Just as Homer still knows Eileithyiai, but later times only one Eileithyia as the goddess of birth,<sup>23</sup> so early times may have known Hephaistoi instead of the one and only Hephaistos.<sup>24</sup> A fairly early Hellenistic inscription from Rhodes attests the existence of an association of Hephaistiastai (*SEG* 30.1004). Is it possible that these were still such a group of blacksmiths or metalworkers?

Thirdly, there is a conglomerate of motifs, which are interrelated in so far as they help to characterize Hephaistos in indirect ways. Let us

19 F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1985), pp. 115–20.

20 Hipp. Ref. 5.7.4; Steph. Byz., s.v. *Lemnos*; Hemberg, *Kabiren*, pp. 163–5. For her temple see L. Beschi, 'Culto e riserva delle acque nel Santuario arcaico di Efaistia', *ASAA* 83 (2005), pp. 95–219.

21 Hemberg, *Kabiren*, *passim*.

22 Dactyls: *Phoronis* F 2 Bernabé; Pherecydes *FGrH* 3 F 47 = F 47 Fowler; Soph. F 366 Radt; Marmor Parium *FGrH* 239.11. Telchines: Strabo 10.3.22. Nine: H. W. Singor, 'Oorsprong en betekenis van de hoplietenphalanx in het archaische Griekenland' (dissertation, Leiden, 1988), pp. 18–34.

23 *Il.* 19.119; S. Pingiatoglou, *Eileithyia*; F. T. van Straten, 'Ikonographie van een mythe', *Lampas* 17 (1984), pp. 162–83; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), p. 173 (Eileithyiae as the reflection of the neighbourhood women); R. Olmos, 'Eileithyia', in *LIMC* III.1 (1986), pp. 685–99.

24 This hesitation between one god and the group (Centaurus/Centauri, Silenus/Silenoi etc.) is well noticed by Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, pp. 34–5, who overlooked the plural 'Hephaistoi'.

start with his roots. In the *Iliad*, the god is the son of Zeus and Hera,<sup>25</sup> but in Hesiod's *Theogony* he is the son of Hera only, just as the monster Typhaon is; in other words, an illegitimate child.<sup>26</sup> Evidently, the god lacked a canonical pair of parents, which may point to a fairly recent integration into the Greek pantheon,<sup>27</sup> even though he is already well established as a god in the Homeric epic, and Homer even mentions his priest in Troy (*Il.* 5.10). On Naxos, Hephaistos was reputed to be the pre-marital son of Zeus and Hera, which is another way of slighting his descent (schol. *Il.* 14.296).

On the other hand, his geographical background is stable. From Homer onwards, it is the island of Lemnos that is considered to be his special homeland.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, southwest of Hephaistia, one of the two cities of Lemnos (Steph. Byz. s.v.), there was a volcanic hill, the Mosychlos, where Hephaistos' atelier was traditionally situated and from where Prometheus was believed to have taken the first fire.<sup>29</sup> It is perhaps to this hill that we have to relate the traditions that fire spontaneously came out of the earth in Lemnos.<sup>30</sup> The island was not just any Greek island. Homer already calls attention to the fact that the inhabitants of Lemnos, the Sintians, were *agriphônoi* (*Il.* 8.294). Their non-Greek nature is also stressed by other notices that call them Thracians (Steph. Byz. s.v. *Lemnos*) or Tyrrhenians (Etruscans).<sup>31</sup> The latter notice is particularly interesting in the light of Etruscoid inscriptions found on Lemnos, which, like the Cabiri with their non-Greek name,<sup>32</sup> strongly support the suggestion that Hephaistos came from a non-Greek background.<sup>33</sup> Although a 'realistic' detail, it will have reinforced the 'marginal' status of the god as a relative outsider.

25 *Il.* 1.577–8, 14.338; 8.312.

26 Hes. *Th.* 927, fr. 343 MW; *Hom. h. Apoll.* 305–55; Stesichorus *PMG* 239.

27 So, rightly, Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, p. 22.

28 *Il.* 1.593; *Od.* 8.283ff; Hes. fr. 148(a) MW.

29 Hellanicus *FGrH* 4 F 71a; Antimachus, fr. 52 Matthews; Eratosthenes, fr. 17 Powell; Nicander, *Ther.* 469–73; Accius *apud* Varro, *LL* 7.10 (from Aeschylus or Sophocles?).

30 Heraclitus, *All.* 26; Eustathius on *Iliad* 1.592.

31 Thuc. 4.109; Philochoros *FGrH* 328 F 100–1; Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1.608.

32 See most recently R. S. P. Beekes, 'The origin of the kabeiroi', *Mnemosyne* IV 57 (2004), pp. 465–77.

33 *SEG* 45.1194; J. Heurgon, *Scripta varia* (Brussels: Latomus 1986), pp. 449–64; Y. Duhoux, 'Les inscriptions non grecques de Lemnos: étrusque ou vieux-perse?', in *Palaeograeca et Mycenaea Antonino Bartoněk quinque et sexagenario oblata* (Brno: Universitas Masarykiana Brunensis, 1991), pp. 53–67; C. de Simone, *I Tirrene a Lemnos* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1996), to be read with the critical review by D. Steinbauer, *Kratylos* 44 (1999), pp. 201–3; M. Malzahn, 'Das Lemnische Alphabet: eine eigenständige Entwicklung', *Studi Etruschi* III.53 (1999), pp. 259–79; H. Rix, *Kleine Schriften* (Bremen: Hempden, 2001), pp. 262–71 (1968').

As regards personal relations, in the *Iliad* Hephaistos is married to one of the Graces, Charis, a lower divinity (*Il.* 18.382–3). Homer does not specify her ranking in the order of birth, but the god Hypnos, who in *Iliad* 14 is modelled on Hephaistos as we will see shortly,<sup>34</sup> receives one of the youngest Graces as a wife (14.267, 275), indeed just as in the *Theogony* Hephaistos marries Aglaïe, ‘the youngest’ (946). This is a subtle indication of the god’s lower status, as in Homeric society it was customary to marry off the oldest daughter first.<sup>35</sup> In the *Odyssey*, he is of course the cuckolded husband of Aphrodite, another divinity low on the divine pecking order.<sup>36</sup> The marriage is virtually unattested outside Homer,<sup>37</sup> and it is clearly not an indication of great divine prominence.

What does it mean that the god sweats (*Il.* 18.372, 414–5)? To the best of my knowledge a history of sweating in Greece (or for that matter elsewhere) still has to be written,<sup>38</sup> but we may at least observe that in Homer sweating is typical of animals, like horses (2.390, *Od.* 4.39) and deer (*Il.* 11.119), of being wounded (5.796) or carrying the shield strap (2.388) and, last but not least, of toiling like Sisyphus (*Od.* 11.599). The only other divinity who sweats in Homer is Hera, who describes how she laboured to ruin the Trojans (*Il.* 4.27). In none of these cases is it ever said of a gentleman or lady of leisure, and it is surely hard to imagine a sweating Zeus.

Why is Hephaistos lame? The quality is regularly mentioned in the *Iliad*, even almost endearingly by Hera.<sup>39</sup> The precise nature of his handicap is not quite certain in the text, since he is sometimes called club-footed (*kyllopodiôn*), sometimes just limping (*chôlos*); evidently, the important thing is to stress that he is unable to walk normally. The handicap must have been traditional, since already on half of the representations before the middle of the sixth century his deformation is clearly indicated.<sup>40</sup> In the case of women, lameness evidently made them a less attractive party, as Herodotus’ story of Corinthian Labda illustrates (5.92). In the case of men, lameness was unacceptable for a king, as the stories about the Athenian king Medon (Paus. 7.2.1), the Cyrenean king Battos III (Her. 4.161) and, in full historical time, the

34 R. Janko on *Il.* 14.256–61.

35 *Il.* 11.740, 13.429, 21.143; cf. Janko on 13.427–33.

36 Bremmer, *Greek Religion*, p. 21.

37 W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften* I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2001), p. 108.

38 For some observations from a medical point of view see A. Debru, *Le corps respirant: La pensée physiologique chez Galien* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 187–90.

39 *Il.* 18.371, 19.270, 20.331.

40 Hermay and Jacquemin, ‘Hephaistos’, 653.

Spartan king Agesilaos (Plut. *Ages.* 2.2, 3.4; Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.3) show.<sup>41</sup> Lameness was the quality of the social outcast, the beggar; witness the words of Samian Asius (fr. 14 West<sup>2</sup>): 'lame, branded, wizened with age, like a beggar he came'. The repeated Aristophanic allegation that Euripides' tragedies were filled with cripples shows that being a cripple was hardly an enviable position.<sup>42</sup> Even though mutilated craftsmen did exist,<sup>43</sup> there is nothing in our tradition to suggest that being mutilated was the norm for archaic craftsmen. Hephaistos' physical handicap is surely symbolic and not a reflection of ancient realities. It is typical for the undermining of this tradition that Apollonius Rhodius says of Palaemonius, of Hephaistian descent, that he 'was lame in both feet. But no one could scorn his stature or courage, and so he too was included among all the heroes and brought greater glory to Jason' (1.204–6, tr. R. Hunter).

A marginal position is also indicated by his activity as wine pourer in Homer. After a moving dialogue with his mother Hera, the limping god offered a cup with nectar first to his mother and subsequently to all the other gods (*Il.* 1.584–600). Now we know that from the archaic era to Roman times, wine pouring was a duty typical for young males.<sup>44</sup> And indeed, Hephaistos is also represented as a youth on early vase paintings,<sup>45</sup> but it is hardly likely that the poets mentally represented him as an adolescent: the fact that later in the *Iliad* (18.382–3) he is married militates against such an assumption. Although being adult, then, Hephaistos performed the task of an adolescent. The humiliation of this role is even stressed by the 'Homeric laughter' of his fellow gods at his limp (*Il.* 1.600).<sup>46</sup> West suggests that Hephaistos' wine pouring has to be compared with Indian and Celtic traditions about divine craftsmen making the gods' drinking vessel,<sup>47</sup> but that clearly is a different motif. Yet there is a connection between Hephaistos and drinking, as we will see shortly.

The combination of a positive and a negative side of Hephaistos

41 See also J. N. Bremmer, 'Medon: the case of the bodily blemished king', in *Perennitas: Studi in onore di Angelo Brelich* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1980), pp. 68–76.

42 Ar. *Ach.* 427, 429, *Pax* 146, *Ra.* 846.

43 Curtius 5.5.5–24; Justinus 11.14.11–12; Diod. Sic. 17.69.2–4.

44 For full evidence see J. N. Bremmer, 'Adolescents, *Symposion*, and pederasty', in O. Murray (ed.), *Symptotica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 135–48, overlooked by A. Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 96; Lucian, *Symp.* 15, *Pseudol.* 21.

45 Hermay and Jacquemin, 'Hephaistos', p. 651.

46 C. Collobert, 'Héphaïstos, l'artisan du rire inextinguible des dieux', in M.-L. Desclos (ed.), *Le rire des Grecs: Anthropologie du rire en Grèce ancienne* (Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2000), pp. 133–41.

47 West, *Indo-European Poetry*, pp. 155f.



is also clear in Athens, where already in the seventh century the Athenians had incorporated the god into their local pantheon in a prominent position; witness Solon's speaking of the 'works of Athena and crafty Hephaistos' and the worship of Athena Hephaistia;<sup>48</sup> in fact, the combination must be older, as it is already mentioned in the *Odyssey*.<sup>49</sup> Hephaistos had at least two festivals in Athens, the Chalkeia and the Hephaisteia. During the first festival the (often metic) craftsmen walked in a procession through the city (Soph. fr. 844 Radt) and honoured Athena as a goddess of craft in conjunction with their patron Hephaistos, an honour that seems to have centred on the Hephaisteion.<sup>50</sup> The relay torch-race at the latter festival probably started at the altar of Prometheus in the Academy, as the two cults were very closely associated, and thus once again suggests the myth of the first fire.<sup>51</sup> It seems plausible that the *Homeric Hymn to Hephaistos* was composed for performance at this festival, probably in 421/0 BC when the festival was reorganized, if not actually instituted;<sup>52</sup> this was also the time that a famous statue of the god was set up by Alkamenēs.<sup>53</sup>

Rather than being a survival from a 'fond préhellénique', as the French scholar Capdeville suggests, this prominent position of the god surely reflects the role of craftsmen in contemporary Athenian society, in whose midst also his temple near the Kerameikos was situated, where the cult statues of Hephaistos and Athena stood next to each other;<sup>54</sup> in fact, temples of Hephaistos are rare and this is another sign of his marginality. The Athenians also seemed to have performed a torch-race for Hephaistos at the Apatouria. Unfortunately, the text is debated, and the torch-race depends on De Valois' emendation of *thyontes*, 'sacrificing', into *theontes*, 'running', in an abbreviated report by Harpocration of the Attic historian Istros on the Apatouria.

48 *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 223.b 4, cf. R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora III* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 98.

49 *Od.* 6.233, 23.160; Solon 13.49–50 West<sup>2</sup>; see also Plato, *Leg.* 11.920d.

50 See now R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 171, 464f.

51 *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 82.32; cf. N. V. Sekunda, 'IG II<sup>2</sup> 1250: a decree concerning the *Lampadephoroi* of the tribe Aiantis', *ZPE* 83 (1990), pp. 149–82 at 155 (= *SEG* 40.124); P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 35–6; Parker, *Polytheism*, pp. 471f.

52 M. L. West, *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 18 (performed at a fifth-century festival); for the importance of the date see Parker, *Polytheism*, p. 471.

53 Cic. *ND* 1.83; Val. Max. 8.11 ext. 3; Paus. 1.14.6; *LIMC* 634f.

54 *Contra* G. Capdeville, *Volcanus* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1995), p. 286. Temple: Hsch. s.v. *Hephaistia*; M. Fuchs, 'Das Hephaesteion in Athen: ein Monument für die Demokratie', *JDAI* 113 (1998), pp. 30–48.

The Apatouria was the festival of the phratries in which they officially enrolled their new members. A torch-race, which in Greece is often connected with a new beginning,<sup>55</sup> seems perfectly at home in this festival.<sup>56</sup>

However, as was the case with the Panhellenic Hephaistos, the Athenians too undercut his status with the curious story of the birth of Athens' ancestor Erichthonius/Erechtheus from his unsuccessful attempt at raping Athena. This 'ludicrous indignity' (Robert Parker) once again points to the ambivalence in the appreciation of the god, which our material so far has already well illustrated.<sup>57</sup> Yet the myth also explains why Aeschylus (*Eum.* 13) could call the inhabitants of Athens 'the sons of Hephaistos' and the Athenians 'Hephaistiadaí' (Hsch. s.v.).

In addition to these more explicit characterizations of Hephaistos, book 14 of the *Iliad* also relates an intriguing story that alludes to one of his most famous exploits in the archaic age. Hera leaves Olympos and goes to Lemnos, 'the city of the divine Thoas' (230), in order to enlist the help of the god Hypnos in letting Zeus fall asleep. As a reward, she promises him a 'nice chair, imperishable, of gold' made by Hephaistos (238–9). Hypnos, however, kindly tries to refuse to cooperate by reminding her of the time that he had also let Zeus fall asleep, but subsequently had been thrown off Olympos by the supreme god. If the goddess Night had not saved him, he would have surely drowned (222–79)!

Clearly, this episode looks very much like a *bricolage* of two myths of Hephaistos,<sup>58</sup> which are partially recoverable for us from various allusions. Let us start with the most famous one. In a brilliant study of 1895,<sup>59</sup> Wilamowitz argued that we can reconstruct an Ionian hymn about a myth of Hephaistos, of which we find traces in Alcaeus (fr. 349 Voigt), Pindar (fr. 283 Maehler) and Plato (*Pol.* 2.378D),<sup>60</sup> and of which we also have many representations on archaic and classical vase

55 Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, p. 234.

56 Istros *FGrH* 334 F 2(a); cf. Parker, *Polytheism*, pp. 460–1, who suggests a mistake, which hardly seems necessary.

57 For the story see R. Parker, 'Myths of early Athens', in J. N. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988<sup>2</sup>), pp. 187–214 at 193–7.

58 See Janko on *Il.* 14.256–61.

59 Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, pp. 5–35; cf. A. Henrichs, "'Der Glaube der Hellenen": Religionsgeschichte als Glaubensbekenntnis und Kulturkritik', in W. M. Calder III et al. (eds), *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 262–305 at 276.

60 As Voigt's edition shows, a few more scraps of Alcaeus' poem have been identified since Wilamowitz; see also Photius η 230 Theod. ~ Suid. η 481 Adler.

paintings and monumental works of art.<sup>61</sup> Wilamowitz still thought that the hymn was addressed to Hephaistos himself, but Bruno Snell has persuasively argued that the addressee must have been Dionysos, and his argument has been accepted by Richard Janko and Reinhold Merkelbach.<sup>62</sup> And indeed, Martin West has persuasively argued that this hymn must be the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysos*.<sup>63</sup>

The story has been preserved more or less by Libanius,<sup>64</sup> who relates that Hephaistos made a chair with invisible chains as a present for his mother. Hera sat down on the chair and could not move. After a meeting of the gods about the ascent of Hephaistos to heaven proved to be ineffective, Ares tried to move Hephaistos, but was chased away with his torches. Finally it was Dionysos who made Hephaistos drunk and got him into heaven. He liberated Hera, who in turn persuaded the other Olympian gods to accept Dionysos as one of them. Wilamowitz still thought that this could not have been the happy end of Alcaeus' poem, but Lobel's persuasive combination of the fragment 'one of the twelve (gods)' (349e Voigt/Liberman) with the other fragments of Alcaeus' poem refutes Wilamowitz' suggestion and leads further credibility to Snell's argument of a poem for Dionysos. The occurrence of the chair in the episode of Hypnos strongly suggests, then, that Homer already knew this myth,<sup>65</sup> which, therefore, will have been hardly contained in just one 'Homeric hymn', as Wilamowitz suggested.<sup>66</sup> The myth may well have been part of other hymns, epic poems or even prose stories, although the *Homeric Hymn* was the only one from these compositions to survive into late antiquity.<sup>67</sup>

After having reconstructed the early myth, what did Wilamowitz make of it? For a modern reader it is immediately striking that in his analysis he does not use the terms 'myth' or 'ritual'. The absence of

61 T. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery in Archaic Greek Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 13–29; *LIMC* IV.1 (1988), pp. 692–5; T. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), pp. 13–17; G. Hedreen, *Silens in Attic Black-figure Vase-Painting* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1992), pp. 13–30; T. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery in Fifth-Century Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 41–9.

62 B. Snell, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966) 102–4; Janko on *Il.* 14.256–61; R. Merkelbach, 'Ein Fragment des homerischen Dionysos-Hymnos', *ZPE* 12 (1973), pp. 212–15 = *Philologica* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1997), pp. 35–7.

63 M. L. West, 'The fragmentary Homeric hymn to Dionysus', *ZPE* 134 (2001), pp. 1–11; see also the new edition in West, *Homeric Hymns*, pp. 26–31.

64 *Lib. Narr.* 7, see also *Hyg. Fab.* 166; *Paus.* 1.20.3; *Aristid. Or.* 41.6; *Serv. auct. Ecl.* 4.62.

65 This is also, albeit somewhat hesitatingly, suggested by West, 'Fragmentary hymn', p. 3 note 9.

66 *Contra* Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, p. 10.

67 As argued by West, 'Fragmentary hymn'.

the latter is of course understandable, since the term was only slowly accepted in Germany,<sup>68</sup> but the absence of the earlier is more puzzling, since Wilamowitz does use the term 'mythographisch'.<sup>69</sup> In his essay, however, he employs as a technical term really only *Kult*, but this does not prevent him from making a most interesting observation. Well before the invention of the myth-and-ritual school,<sup>70</sup> Wilamowitz already connected the myth with a Samian ritual, the Toneia, where the statue of Hera was moved out of the temple and temporarily exhibited near a sacred *lygos* tree, a kind of Greek *arbor infelix*.<sup>71</sup> The tree recurs in the myth, which, as is related in great detail by a local historian, mentions that the Carians tied the statue to a tree. The fettering of the statue can be paralleled with a number of other examples in Greece and Rome. In almost all of these cases, the gods are considered to be dangerous and their festival during which the statue is unfettered is often characterized by dissolution of the social order. The ritual binding, then, is reflected in the mythical binding of Hera.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, as Wilamowitz persuasively suggests, the author of the *Odyssey* was inspired by this example when making up the scene of the binding of Ares and Aphrodite in the song of Demodokos (8.266–366).<sup>73</sup>

The 'Samian connection' clearly points to an origin of the myth on Samos, where we already find the name Hephaistopolis in Herodotus (2.134), or on one of its neighbouring islands Kos or Ikaros, which are both mentioned in the *Hymn* (A1 West). About this origin, which of course cannot be separated from the close

68 Bremmer, "'Religion", "ritual" and the opposition "sacred vs. profane": notes towards a terminological "genealogy"', in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Festschrift für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1998), pp. 9–32.

69 Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, p. 10.

70 W. M. Calder III (ed.), *The Cambridge Ritualists Reconsidered* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991); F. J. Korom, 'Ritualistische Theorie', in R. W. Brednich (ed.), *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 11 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2004), pp. 724–31.

71 For the *lygos* see the brilliant paper by H. von Staden, 'Spiderwoman and the chaste tree: the semantics of matter', *Configurations* 1 (1992), pp. 23–56, overlooked by N. M. Borengässer, 'Agnus castus: ein Kraut für alle Fälle', in *Chartulae: Festschrift für Wolfgang Speyer = Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband* 28 (1998), pp. 4–13; add N. P. Milner, *An Epigraphical Survey in the Kibyra-Olbasa Region Conducted by A. S. Hall* (Ankara: British School of Archaeology in Ankara, 1998), no. 115.C.10–1: α λυγοστρόπος.

72 Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, pp. 23–5, with an, admittedly, improbable explanation. For a fine modern analysis of the myth and ritual see Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 93–6, overlooked by West, 'Fragmentary hymn', p. 3 note 12.

73 Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, p. 14, too waveringly accepted by Burkert, *Kleine Schriften* I, p. 108. For a modern parallel of Hephaistos' binding see W. Hansen, 'The stuck couple in ancient Greece', *FOAFtale News* 36 (1995), pp. 2–3 (<http://www.folklore.ee/FOAFtale/ftn36.htm#stuckcouple>).

association of Hera and Hephaistos in Hephaistos' birth myth, we can only speculate. However, as the connection between the Mother and the Cabiri is well established,<sup>74</sup> one can perhaps see the connection of Hera and Hephaistos as a local variant of this association, which once again points to pre-Greek traditions in the background, the more so, since the cult of the Meter reached Greece probably more via northern than southern Ionia and was not prominent on Samos.<sup>75</sup>

In addition to the myth of his binding of Hera, there is also a reference to a second myth about Hephaistos in the passage about Hypnos. It is mentioned that after he had tried to liberate his mother Hera, who had been suspended in the sky, his father Zeus physically flung him from Mount Olympos as far as Lemnos, where he finally landed after a whole day falling,<sup>76</sup> exactly like Hypnos. In the other case, his mother Hera threw him out literally just because he was lame, but he was saved by Eurynome and Thetis, with whom he stayed for nine years (*Il.* 18.400), learning his art. Thetis' rescue of Hephaistos recurs in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (318–20) and in Apollodorus (1.3.5), who connects the episode with the birth of Hephaistos, the storm with which Hera buffeted Herakles (*Il.* 14.250–61), Zeus' punishment of her and of Hephaistos, and the birth of Athena. Although he cannot prove it, Richard Janko (on *Il.* 14.295–6) has seductively suggested that the episode goes back to an old source of Apollodorus, probably Eumelos of Corinth's early *Titanomachy*. This would certainly make sense, since then the birth of Athena is the 'master piece' of Hephaistos, bringing his nine-year apprenticeship to a close. Nine years is also the duration of the period that Arcadian youths had to live away from civilized society as 'wolves', and more or less similar periods are attested for Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Ossetic youths.<sup>77</sup> Apparently, this is a case of fosterage with presumably some reference to initiation among craftsmen in the background, although one can

74 Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 117f.

75 Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 113–15; P. Borgeaud, *La Mère des dieux: de Cybèle à la vierge Marie* (Paris: Seuil, 1996).

76 *Il.* I.590–4, echoed by AR I.601–10; cf. J. J. Clauss, 'Two curious reflections in the Argonautic looking-glass (*Argo*. I.577 and 603)', *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* 41 (1989), pp. 195–207 at 201–3; Plato, *Resp.* 2.378d; Accius *apud* Varro, *LL* 7.10; Val. Flacc. *Arg.* 2.82–93; Galen XII.173K. For interesting observations on this fall see A. Purves, 'Falling into time in Homer's *Iliad*', *Cl Ant* 25 (2006), pp. 179–209 at 197–201.

77 J. N. Bremmer and N. M. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography* (London: University of London, Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), p. 56 (by Bremmer) and 'Myth and ritual in Greek human sacrifice: Lykaon, Polyxena and the case of the Rhodian criminal', in J. N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), pp. 55–79 at 73f.

hardly say that all details are transparent.<sup>78</sup> When we now return to the case of Hypnos, with which we started this digression, we can conclude that Homer refers to various myths of Hephaistos, which pushes the incorporation of this god into the Greek pantheon certainly back to the beginning of the archaic period.

The assistance with the birth of armed Athena, Hephaistos' master piece as I called it, was a highly popular theme among archaic artists and starts to appear on the Peloponnese already from about 625 BC, but receives its greatest popularity in Attica in the period 575–525 BC, perhaps due to the close connection between Peisistratos and Athena.<sup>79</sup> For our purpose, it is important to observe that both Eileithyia as the goddess of birth and Hephaistos appear on all the seven Peloponnesian representations, but that on about 50 per cent of the Attic black-figure vase paintings the god is absent. Despite his prominent position in Attic mythology (below), many vase painters evidently did not consider Hephaistos' canonical presence at the birth of Athens' most prominent divinity desirable.

As we have already seen, the liberation of Hera took place through the close association of Hephaistos and Dionysos. The event was extremely popular on Greek vase painting in general and that of Attica in particular. For our theme, these representations are interesting in more than one aspect. First, they add another way of characterizing Hephaistos as an inferior god. On the famous François Vase by Kleitias, for example, all the ranking gods arrive at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in chariots, whereas Hephaistos brings up the rear riding a donkey; similarly, on a dinos by Sophilos with the same theme, the procession is once again concluded by Hephaistos on his donkey, whereas the most important gods travel on chariots and lesser divinities on foot.<sup>80</sup> The donkey associates Hephaistos with small landholders and craftsmen, and its libidinous nature characterizes it as an animal without the self-control that befitted the aristocrats.<sup>81</sup> In other words, in more than one way, Hephaistos is characterized as a marginal god in contrast to his fellow deities.

Traditionally, Dionysos made Hephaistos drunk on the island of

78 The initiatory background has been repeatedly argued; cf. Delcourt, *Héphaistos ou la légende du magicien*, pp. 41–6; Capdeville, *Volcanus*, 276.

79 So F. T. van Straten in his enlightening 'Ikönographie van een mythe: de geboorte van Athena', *Lampas* 17 (1984), pp. 162–83 at 171.

80 A.-F. Laurens and F. Lissarrague, 'Entre dieux', *Metis* 5 (1990 [1992]), pp. 53–73.

81 I. Opelt, 'Esel', in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 6 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1966), pp. 564–95; Hedreen, *Silens*, p. 19; W. Luppe, 'Der geile Esel bei Archilochos', *Hermes* 113 (1995), pp. 247–9; J. M. Padgett, 'The stable hands of Dionysos: satyrs and donkeys as symbols of social marginalization in Attic vase painting', in B. Cohen (ed.), *Not the Classical Ideal* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 43–70.

Naxos,<sup>82</sup> which is not that distant from Samos – one more indication that the inventor of this myth did not come from Lemnos and surroundings. But why were Dionysos and Hephaistos so closely and persistently associated? Wilamowitz' reasoning – that the simple fact that Naxos was one of the oldest places known to worship Dionysos automatically would connect him with Hephaistos<sup>83</sup> – is of course somewhat naïve and leaves the problem unsolved. A general answer might be that both gods are located on the fringe of the social order and therefore naturally associated. Yet such general answers are rarely wholly satisfactory. For example, Ares would be another god on the social fringe, but his relation with Hephaistos is clearly uneasy: in our myth, Ares was chased away with torches, Hephaistos is cuckolded by Ares in Demodokos' song about the adultery of Aphrodite noted above, and Artemidorus (4.73) mentions in his *Dreambook* that hostility is to be expected when one dreams of Ares and Hephaistos.

A different explanation might look for a structural connection. Is there anything in metallurgy which points to a prominence of drinking? The idea seems preposterous and is perhaps indeed so, when the problem is put in these terms. However, we may come nearer to the truth when we take into account the close association of Hephaistos with the Cabiri. The excavation of the Theban Cabirion has given us many drinking cups and representations of drinking scenes, but Aeschylus' Lemnian Cabiri clearly enjoy their wine (F 96–7 Radt), and in the Lemnian Cabirion most of the ceramic finds throughout the seventh and sixth centuries were drinking vessels;<sup>84</sup> moreover, the same drinking vessels have been found on neighbouring Samothrace in the sanctuary of the Cabiri or the Great Gods.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, the mythical connection between Dionysos and Hephaistos may well go back to early Greek, if not pre-Greek, rituals. Do we perhaps find here the traces of the connection between smiths and drinking that West postulated?

Let us come to a close. What kind of picture have we found? On the one hand, Hephaistos is the god who is deformed, sweats like a peasant, lives on a non-Greek island, gets the wrong girl, is not particularly sexually adept and practises a craft which puts him aside

82 Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, pp. 25–7; Hedreen, *Silens*, pp. 20–4.

83 Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2, pp. 26f.

84 D. Levi, 'Il cabirio di Lemno', *Charisterion eis Anastasion K. Orlandon* 3 (Athens, 1966), pp. 110–32; Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, p. 329; M. Daumas, *Cabiriaca: Recherches sur l'iconographie du culte des Cabires* (Paris: de Boccard, 1998) *passim*; SEG 47.1329.

85 Graham, 'Colonization of Samothrace', p. 249, rightly accepts the early testimonies of Herodotus and Stesimbrotos that the Samothracian sanctuary originally belonged to the Cabiri.

from the other gods. On the other, he is the famous creator of impressive works of art through his metallurgical expertise. This side of Hephaistos is usually underrated, but belongs to the oldest layer of his recoverable existence, since the combination *periklutos amphigyêis*, 'the famous lame one' (*Il.* 1.607, 18.383, etc.), as the German linguist Humbach observed, points to an old layer of Hephaistos' tradition in which *amphigyêis* had not yet received its later meaning 'with both feet crooked, lame'.<sup>86</sup> In fact, it is surprising how often the epithet 'famous' is applied to Hephaistos, who in Homer and Hesiod is over and over called *klytos*, *periklytos*, *agaklytos*, *klytotechnês*, *klytoergos* and *klytomêtis*.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, these Greek words for 'famous' are all formed on the old root *\*klu*, 'hear, hear of', which goes back to Proto-Indo-European times.<sup>88</sup> It clearly looks as if the god occupied a higher status in the period before he becomes fully visible in the sources.

How do we explain this ambivalence? Fritz Graf has attractively suggested that Hephaistos' picture 'preserves among an aristocratic society the physiognomy of a cunning blacksmith whose professional skills are highly admired and secretly feared'.<sup>89</sup> We may add that this aristocratic society evidently admired, even if in an ambivalent manner, these smiths so much that they opted for a divine representative of the craft in their pantheon. In the course of this selection the god lost his local ties with the group of blacksmiths, the Cabiri, but his associations with Dionysos and Aphrodite helped to integrate him better into the Greek pantheon. Yet by undercutting the dignity of Hephaistos in a variety of ways, those early aristocratic Greeks also stressed the marginal position of the smiths on whom they were depending for their arms and jewellery. Thinking about the gods still can teach us many things about mortals.

86 H. Humbach, 'ἀμφίγυος und ἀμφιγυήεις', in *Studi linguistici in onore di Vittore Pisani*, 2 vols (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1969), II, pp. 569–78.

87 West on Hes. *Theog.* 927.

88 West, *Indo-European Poetry*, pp. 129, 397.

89 Graf, 'Hephaestus'.



# TRANSFORMING ARTEMIS: FROM THE GODDESS OF THE OUTDOORS TO CITY GODDESS

*Ivana Petrovic*

One of the most celebrated works of art in antiquity, famous for its artistic qualities, the impression it left on its observer and its technical excellence, was Pheidias' enthroned *Zeus* made for the sanctuary at Olympia.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that this particular statue was, according to the tradition, approved by two authorities: Zeus himself and Homer.

According to widespread tradition,<sup>2</sup> Pheidias' representation of Zeus was inspired by the following verses from the *Iliad* (1. 528–30): 'As he spoke, the son of Kronos bowed his dark brows, and the ambrosial locks swayed on his immortal head, till vast Olympos reeled.'<sup>3</sup> The statue, made according to the Homeric description of the god, pleased the deity too. Pausanias relates a tradition according to which Pheidias prayed to the god 'to show by a sign whether the work was to his liking. Immediately, runs the legend, a thunderbolt fell on that part of the floor where down to the present day the bronze jar stood to cover the place' (5.11.9).

This story not only emphasizes the status and great artistry of Pheidias' *Zeus*, but is also an important testimony of the role the Homeric epics played in the shaping of the Greek concept of divine. Herodotus (2.53.2) famously stated that it was Homer and Hesiod who taught the Greeks the ancestry of the gods, gave the gods their epithets, distributed their honours and areas of expertise, and described their outward forms.

The anecdote about Pheidias' statue of Zeus testifies not only that the Homeric epics were indeed perceived as very important for visualizing divine beings, it also features a god personally approving of this

1 For the statue see Lapatin, this volume, Chapter 7; Barringer, this volume, Chapter 8, esp. Fig. 8.1.

2 See T 692–754 in J. Overbeck, *Die antiken Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der bildenden Künste bei den Griechen* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1868).

3 Translation: Butler.

depiction. By expressing his approval of Pheidias' statue, Zeus was at the same time approving of the Homeric picture of himself.

This chapter will investigate the impact of early Greek epic on subsequent literary representations of another god, one who would perhaps not react to her depiction as favourably as Zeus had done. It discusses the representation of Artemis in early Greek epic and the impact of this representation on subsequent poetry. I shall argue that, even though the Homeric Artemis has little to do with the Artemis of Greek cult, the image of the goddess created in early epic was so influential that it dominated Greek poetry for centuries. It was only in Hellenistic poetry that the depiction of the goddess was modified to bear a stronger resemblance to the role Artemis played in cult.

## 1 ARTEMIS IN EARLY EPIC POETRY

Herodotus' statement regarding the impact of early epic on the visual and literary representation of the Greek gods may be bold, but the fact is that the depiction of the gods in early Greek epic was viewed as fundamental both by poets who adopted the characters of the gods as represented in it and by philosophers who criticized them.<sup>4</sup> However, if these texts were indeed crucial for determining the literary characterization of the Greek gods, how do we explain the fact that the distribution of the honours and competences of the deities in them does not really reflect contemporary cult practice? And furthermore, how do we explain the fact that, to Greek audiences, this didn't really matter?

In the distribution of honours and competences allegedly made by Homer and Hesiod, some gods scored poorly. This is very obvious in the case of Artemis. She was after all one of the oldest Greek deities with one of the most widespread cults, and yet the literary persona of the goddess differs greatly from the conception that grew in her worship.

In the *Iliad*, Artemis makes a rather sorry sight in the only scene where she is presented at some length. In the showdown of the gods, she slyly attempts to incite Apollo to fight his uncle Poseidon, and showers him with insults when he refuses. Then Hera insults her and puts her back in her 'proper place', first verbally and then physically (*Il.* 21.481–8):

4 On gods in Homer see B. C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods* (London: Athlone Press, 1965); M. Willcock, 'Some aspects of the gods in the *Iliad*', *BICS* 17 (1970), pp. 1–10; J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 144–204; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion, Archaic and Classical*, tr. J. Raffan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), pp. 119ff; E. Kearns, 'The gods in the Homeric epics', in R. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 59–73.

‘How dare you, you shameless dog, to stand up to me?!’ – Hera screams – ‘certainly you are no match for me, even if Zeus gave you your bow and arrows and made you a lioness to women and allowed you to kill whichever you wish. Go and slaughter wild deer in the mountains: this is much better for you than fighting your superiors. Since you wish to try your hand at war and want to fight against me, let me teach you once and for all just how much mightier I am!’

Then Hera grabs Artemis and beats her with her own bow and arrows, smiling all the while. Humiliated and reduced to tears, Artemis seeks the comfort and protection of her father, while Leto gathers her daughter’s scattered weapons. This episode agrees well with the characterization of Artemis elsewhere in the *Iliad*. The most common epithets used for Artemis in the *Iliad* are *iocheaira* (‘of the showering arrows’), *agrotera* (‘of the wilds’) and *potnia thêrôn* (‘mistress of animals’). They qualify her as a goddess of hunting and wild animals. However, each and every time these domains are mentioned, they appear in a markedly negative context. It is as if the poet was trying hard to demonstrate that the domains of Artemis are not worth very much. Three times she appears as a ‘mistress of animals’ in the *Iliad*, first in book 5 (49–58) as the goddess who taught Skamandrios to hunt. However, when Skamandrios was attacked by Menelaos, he proved to be an easy target. The poet even asserts the futility of the divine gift (*Il.* 5.53–8):

But Artemis the Mistress of the Bow was of no help to him now, nor were the long shots that had won him fame. For as Skamandrios fled before him, the glorious spearman Menelaos son of Atreus struck him with his lance in the middle of the back between the shoulders and drove it through his chest.

The spear triumphs over arrows, and the gifts of Artemis are obviously worthless in open battle. The second time Artemis’ domain as mistress of animals is referred to, in *Iliad* book 9, she is not helping anyone either: she sent the Kalydonian boar to punish Oineus for neglecting her (533–42). Finally, she is called *agrotera* and *potnia thêrôn* in book 21, just before Hera decides to demonstrate how pointless and irrelevant these epithets actually are (470–1).

Four times Artemis is mentioned as a slayer of women in the *Iliad*.<sup>5</sup> Her beauty is not mentioned in the *Iliad* at all, though there

5 *Il.* 6.205; 6.428; 19.59; 24.606.

is one fleeting reference to the beauty of the girls who danced in her choruses.<sup>6</sup> The only instance in the *Iliad* where the actions of the goddess are actually beneficial for someone is in the fifth book, where Artemis and Leto are healing Aeneas in Apollo's temple.<sup>7</sup> In sum, in the *Iliad*, Artemis is represented as a killer of women and wild beasts. She is characterized as a vengeful, insolent brat, certainly not capable of holding her own among the Olympian gods.

Her representation in the *Odyssey* is slightly more positive. Her beauty is underlined in similes where Helen (4.121–2), Nausikaa<sup>8</sup> and Penelope<sup>9</sup> are compared to Artemis, but as far as honours and competences go, she is still little more than a slayer of beasts and women. She is mentioned seven times as the one who sends death to women, but, at least in the *Odyssey*, this death is characterized as a *pleasant and peaceful one*.<sup>10</sup>

As for her competence as a goddess of hunting, it is mentioned only once, in the beautiful simile in *Odyssey* book 6 (102–9):

As Artemis, who showers arrows, moves on the mountains either along Taygetos or on high-towering Erymanthos, delighting in boars and deer in their running, and along with her the nymphs, daughters of Zeus of the aegis, range in the wilds and play, and the heart of Leto is gladdened, for the head and the brows of Artemis are above all the others, and she is easily marked among them, though all are lovely, so this one shone among her hand-maidens, a virgin unwedded.<sup>11</sup>

Burkert rightly asserts that this scene became the definitive picture of the goddess in Greek literature and iconography.<sup>12</sup> The depiction of the beautiful goddess Artemis surrounded by her nymphs, which was so influential in Greek and Roman poetry, has but little correspondence in Greek cult, as Artemis was almost never venerated together with the nymphs.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the romantic idea of the lovely

6 Hermes kidnapped the beautiful Polymele when he saw her dance for Artemis: *Il* 16.181–4.

7 *Il*. 5.445–8. Artemis had several cults as a healing deity, but I think that here she is primarily serving as a substitute for her brother (note the fact that the healing takes place in the temple of Apollo, l. 446).

8 *Od*. 6.101–9, 151f.

9 *Od*. 17.37; 19.54.

10 Artemis kills women: *Od*. 11.172–3; 11.324; 15. 409–11; 18.201–5; 20.61–3, 80–3.

11 Translation: Lattimore.

12 Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 150.

13 In Apollonius 3.876–86 and Virgil, *Aen*. 1.498–501, the simile is used in depictions of Medea and Dido; J. Larson, 'Handmaidens of Artemis?', *Classical Journal* 92 (1997), pp. 249–57.

huntress, the goddess of the outdoors as Wilamowitz succinctly characterized her,<sup>14</sup> lingers almost to this day, as most textbook articles and encyclopedia entries focus on her virginity and fondness for wild nature and its creatures.

Turning to Hesiod, we cannot find many significant additions to the literary characterization of Artemis. She is mentioned only twice in the *Theogony*, once at the beginning (14), alongside other gods being hymned by the Muses, and once in 918 as a child of Zeus and Leto. Both times she bears the epithet *iocheaira* ('of the showering arrows').

She must have played a more prominent role in the *Catalogue of Women*. Judging from the three fragments of the *Catalogue* which do mention her (one dealing with Kallisto,<sup>15</sup> one with the sacrifice of Iphigeneia<sup>16</sup> and one with Orion<sup>17</sup>), Artemis was probably characterized as a stern mistress of wild animals and marriageable maidens, quick to punish all who challenge or insult her in any way.

Artemis is not mentioned at all in the *Works and Days*. It is interesting to note that Hesiod does state that the seventh day of the month, the birthday of Apollo, is among the holiest days (770–1), but he characterizes the sixth of the month, which was the traditional birthday of Artemis, in the following manner (782–4): 'very unfavourable for plants, but good for the birth of males, though unfavourable for a girl either to be born at all or to be married'. Perhaps Hesiod was unaware of the tradition according to which the goddess Artemis was born on the sixth,<sup>18</sup> or simply failed to observe it. Be that as it may, the characterization of Artemis in Hesiod does not really add much to Homer's picture.

Let me conclude the discussion of Homer and Hesiod, the canonical texts of Herodotus, by considering the representation of Artemis in the corpus of *Homeric Hymns*. Even though the two hymns dedicated to Artemis are rather short, they do add an important characteristic

14 'Herrin des Draussen', in U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 vols (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1955<sup>2</sup>), I, p. 175, and II, p. 145.

15 Fr. 163 Merkelbach-West. On Kallisto in early Greek poetry see T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 725–9.

16 Fr. 23a–b Merkelbach-West. In *Ehoiai* she is called Iphimede. On Iphimede/Iphigeneia in Hesiod see Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, pp. 27, 582–4.

17 Fr. 148 Merkelbach-West.

18 Cf. M. L. West, *Hesiod, Works and Days: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 356 ad loc.: 'Hesiod seems unaware of it (sc. of the sixth being the birthday of Artemis) for she would have made it an excellent day for a girl's birth.'

to the depiction of the goddess, one unmentioned in epic poetry: she is represented as the goddess of music, leading the chorus of Muses and Graces. The longer *Hymn to Artemis* (27) initially depicts her as a virginal huntress (27, 2–10) but then goes on to offer a delightful description of Artemis leading the song in Delphi (11–20):

When the animal-watcher goddess profuse of arrows has had her pleasure and cheered her spirits, she unstrings her bent bow and goes to the great house of her dear brother Phoibos Apollo, to Delphi's rich community, to organize the Muses' and Graces' fair dance. There she hangs up her bent-back bow and her arrows and goes before, her body beautifully adorned, leading the dances, while they with divine voices celebrate fair-ankled Leto, how she bore children outstanding among the immortals both in counsel and action.<sup>19</sup>

A very similar representation of Artemis the chorus-leader occurs in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*.<sup>20</sup> Calame argued persuasively that these passages, as well as the simile from the sixth book of the *Odyssey* depicting Artemis sporting with the nymphs, reflect Artemis' role in female initiation rituals.<sup>21</sup> The dances young marriageable girls performed for Artemis were famous and their ubiquity became proverbial.<sup>22</sup>

The main honours and competences of Artemis are summarized in the *Hymn to Aphrodite*. At the beginning of the hymn, the goddesses who did not yield to the power of Aphrodite are enumerated, among them the chaste Artemis. Five verses encapsulate her spheres of influence: hunting, singing and dancing, and finally, rather surprisingly, 'the city of upright men' (16–20):

Nor is Artemis of the gold shafts and view-halloo ever overcome in love by smile-loving Aphrodite, for she too likes other things,

<sup>19</sup> Translation: West, Loeb.

<sup>20</sup> *H.H. Ap.* 3.194–9.

<sup>21</sup> C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece*, tr. D. Collins and J. Orion (Lanham, MD, New York and London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), pp. 91–101, 142–85. On the motif of the girl snatched from the chorus of Artemis, see I. Petrovic, 'Artemisfeste und Frauen: Göttliche Didaktik als literarischer Topos', in A. Hornung et al. (eds), *Studia humanitatis ac litterarum trifolio Heidelbergiensi dedicata: Festschrift für E. Christmann, W. Edelmeier, R. Kettemann* (Heidelberg: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 275–94.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Aes. *Prov.* 9: ποῦ γὰρ ἡ Ἀρτεμις οὐκ ἐχόρευσεν. Due to the important role choruses played in her cult, the goddess also had the cult epithet Humnia in Arcadia (Paus. 8.5.11 and 13.1).

archery and hunting animals in the mountains, lyres, dances, and piercing yells, shady groves, and a city of righteous men.<sup>23</sup>

All other domains of influence enumerated in this hymn are given in the plural, but the city is in the singular. One could perhaps conclude that it is one particular city whose upright men were dear to Artemis. Judging on the basis of her role in the *Iliad*, perhaps it is Troy.

If we were to use early Greek epic as our sole source for the history of Greek religion, we could easily have concluded that Artemis was a marginal goddess, daughter of Zeus and Leto, sister of Apollo, a virginal huntress who delights in song and dance, surrounded by nymphs, but also a slayer of women and irascible punisher of mortals. However, Artemis was in fact the goddess with the most widespread cults of all Greek female deities; only Apollo had more shrines and temples than she did.<sup>24</sup> She was also arguably one of the oldest Greek deities.<sup>25</sup> It is simply astonishing that she plays such a marginal role in early Greek poetry. It is also surprising that in the Homeric poems, her role as protector of women, especially in childbirth, is glossed over and that she is presented instead as their killer. Hera's derision of Artemis as a 'lion to women' is in fact a succinct encapsulation of the *Iliad's* attitude to the goddess in general. All her characteristics are presented in a negative light: as a huntress, she is useless in an open combat; as a deity of women, she is a killer; as a protector of wild nature, she sends horrible beasts to punish humans. Among the Olympians, she is out of her depth; to humans, she is a terrible mistress.

Early Greek epic sums up the most important characteristics of the cult of Artemis, but only in order to present their negative foil. It is only when we move on from Homer and Hesiod to later poetry that we realize the full meaning of Herodotus' statement about the importance of the two archaic poets for the characterization of gods in literature. For even though the representation of Artemis in the early epic barely corresponds to her role in cult and does not provide an accurate impression of her importance in the Greek pantheon at all, it did become conventional. Even when the texts are local in character and depict local deities, their characteristics as depicted in the Panhellenic epics still influence the representation greatly.

23 Translation: West, Loeb (slightly modified).

24 G. B. Hussey, 'The distribution of Hellenic temples', *AJA* 6 (1890), pp. 59–64.

25 Linear B tablets from Pylos record the word *atemit-*, but it is still disputed whether this is a testimony of the cult of Artemis in the Mycenaean age. See C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'A-te-mi-to and A-ti-mi-te', *Kadmos* 9 (1970), pp. 42–7.

## 2 ARTEMIS IN DRAMA

In Athenian tragedy we do get an occasional glimpse of the local cults of Artemis, but her characterization still owes much to the Homeric slayer of women. Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* depicts a cruel, cryptic goddess who communicates through bird-signs and is so enraged over the destiny of Troy that she demands the life of an innocent virgin.<sup>26</sup> Since Aeschylus does not mention the miraculous salvation of Iphigeneia, but dwells on the horrific scene of her (unwilling!) sacrifice, it is the cruel nature of Artemis that hangs over the whole trilogy, which depicts the terrible chain of slaughter in the house of Agamemnon. Artemis is still a vengeful, capricious, dangerous deity.

The Iphigeneia episode was very popular with all tragedians.<sup>27</sup> Euripides, too, stresses the cruel, bloodthirsty nature of the goddess, who may have substituted a deer for a virgin in Aulis, but nevertheless receives human sacrifices in the barbaric land of the Taurians. The bloodthirsty Artemis has to be appeased through the agency of Athena and Apollo, who 'civilize' her by transporting her image to the Attic Halai and by introducing a milder ritual without human sacrifice.<sup>28</sup>

Paradoxically, on the Athenian stage, Artemis is still mainly destroying the very creatures she is supposed to protect – the young and chaste. She does not do anything to save Hippolytos, but does promise to kill a favourite of Aphrodite's in revenge. Again, as in the *Iliad*, the goddess is at the same time powerless when facing other Olympians, and a terrible, cruel mistress of the very ones she is supposed to be guarding. Artemis obviously had a reputation for cruelty in Athens. In Sophocles' *Ajax*, upon realizing that the hero has gone mad, the chorus suggests that it was probably the work of Artemis, who is punishing him as a retribution for a victory that had paid her no tribute (172–8).

However, in both tragedy and comedy, it is also obvious that Artemis is a very important and beloved goddess among women. Female characters often swear by her,<sup>29</sup> they call upon her to protect

26 See H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Artemis and Iphigeneia', *JHS* 103 (1983), pp. 87–102 = H. Lloyd-Jones, *Greek Comedy, Hellenistic Literature, Greek Religion, and Miscellanea: The Academic Papers of Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), II, pp. 306–30; J. N. Bremmer, 'Sacrificing a child in ancient Greece: the case of Iphigeneia', in E. Noort and E. J. C. Tigchelaar (eds), *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (Leiden, Brill, 2001), pp. 21–43.

27 See Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, pp. 584–8.

28 E. *IT* 1449–61. See F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1985), pp. 410–17.

29 S. *El.* 626, 1239; Ar. *Lys.* 435, 922, 949; *Th.* 517, 569, 742; *Ec.* 90, 136; Men. *Dysc.* 874.



them against enemies,<sup>30</sup> or pray to her<sup>31</sup> and fondly mention her sanctuaries and choruses.<sup>32</sup> This depiction of Artemis as especially important for women does roughly agree with her local cults, as, in Attica, she was indeed venerated as a deity of childbirth and female initiation. She presided over female rites of passage (as Brauronia, Munychia,<sup>33</sup> Tauropolos<sup>34</sup>), childbirth (Locheia, Eileithyia) and child-rearing (Kourotrophos).<sup>35</sup> At her Attic sanctuaries, chosen girls underwent rituals meant to turn them into marriageable *parthenoi* (at Brauron).<sup>36</sup> However, she also received yearly offerings as a goddess of combat.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps due to the paucity of transmitted plays, the warlike aspects of the goddess are not mentioned in extant Attic drama.

### 3 ARTEMIS AS A CITY GODDESS

Whereas in many poleis of mainland Greece Artemis was primarily a goddess of hunting, initiation and childbirth, she had a rather

30 E. *Ph.* 152.

31 A. *Th.* 154; *Supp.* 1030; S. *Tr.* 213; E. *Med.* 160; *Ph.* 192; Ar. *Th.* 115–20, 970.

32 E. *Hec.* 464.

33 On the cult of Artemis in Brauron and Munychia see J. D. Condis, 'APTEMIS BPAYPΩNIA', *AD* 22 (1976), pp. 156–206; M. B. Hollinshead, 'Legend, cult and architecture at three sanctuaries of Artemis', dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1979, Ann Arbor, 1980; L. Palaiokrassa, *Tò isòò tḗs Ἀρτέμιδος Μουνυχίας* (Athens: Archaiologike Hetaireia, 1991).

34 On Artemis Tauropolos in Halai see Hollinshead, 'Three sanctuaries of Artemis'; L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin: Heinrich Keller, 1932), pp. 208ff.

35 On Artemis as a goddess of birth and childrearing see P. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque Hellénistique et à l'époque Impériale* (Paris: De Boccard, 1970), pp. 191ff; T. H. Price, *Kourotrophos: Cults and Representations of the Greek Nursing Deities* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); H. King, 'Bound to bleed: Artemis and Greek women', in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds), *Images of Women in Antiquity* (New York, London: Routledge, 1985), pp. 109–27; S. G. Cole, 'Domesticating Artemis', in S. G. Cole, *Landscapes, Gender and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 198–230.

36 On the ritual *arkteia* see A. Brelich, *Paidēs e parthenoi* (Rome: Ateneo, 1969); L. Kahil, 'L'Artemis de Brauron: rites et mystères', *Antike Kunst* 20 (1977), pp. 86–98, and 'Mythological repertoire of Brauron' in W. G. Moon (ed.), *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 231–44; K. Dowden, *Death and the Maiden* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 9–47; W. Sale, 'The temple-legends of the Arkteia', *Rheinisches Museum* 118 (1975), pp. 265–84; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Studies in Girls' Transitions* (Athens: Kardamitsa, 1988); S. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 90–7; B. Gentili and F. Perusino (eds), *Le orsi di Brauron: Un rituale di iniziazione femminile nel santuario di Artemide* (Pisa: ETS, 2002).

37 The Athenians conducted annual sacrifices to Artemis Agrotera and Enyalios in thanksgiving for the victory at Marathon (Aristot. *Ath. Pol.* 58.1).

different role in the cities of Asia Minor and in the Greek West. In these areas Artemis was a very important city goddess.<sup>38</sup> In many cities she was regarded as protector and principal deity. Artemis Leukophryênê ('white-browed') was the main goddess of Magnesia on the Maeander; as Astias ('of the citadel') and Prokathêgemôn ('leader') she was worshipped as city goddess in Iasos (Caria), as Kyria ('mistress') in Laodikeia (Syria) and Milyas (Lycia), as Artemis Myrea in Myra (Lycia), as Artemis Kindyas in Kindye in Caria, as Anaitis in Hypaipa, as Sardianê in Sardes.<sup>39</sup>

Cults of Artemis in Perge (Pamphylia) and Ephesos were especially prominent. Not only was she these two cities' main goddess, but they were avid propagators of her cult in the whole of Asia Minor and helped institute it in countless cities of the hinterland.<sup>40</sup>

However, we have very little literary evidence for this aspect of the cult of Artemis. Even though the archaeological evidence for the importance of Artemis in the West is conclusive,<sup>41</sup> the only extant piece of poetry clearly characterizing Artemis as a city goddess in the West is the eleventh ode of Bacchylides. This ode celebrates the victory of a certain Alexidamos of Metapontion in the boys' wrestling contest at the Pythian games.<sup>42</sup> It is, however, conspicuous that even though the poet clearly exhorts Artemis as the main city goddess of Metapontion and refers to her as 'living in Metapontion with good fortune, the golden mistress of the people' (11.115–17), he introduces the goddess in a distinctly Homeric fashion, by employing the Homeric epithet *chrysêlakatos* (37–9):

38 On the cult of city deities, see U. Brackertz, 'Zum Problem der Schutzgottheiten griechischer Städte', dissertation, Berlin, 1976.

39 For *testimonia* and bibliography, see I. Petrovic, *Von den Toren des Hades zu den Hallen des Olymp: Artemiskult bei Theokrit und Kallimachos* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 201–2.

40 See Petrovic, *Artemiskult*, pp. 202–21, for a discussion of cults of Artemis in Ephesos and Perge, with bibliography.

41 G. Olbrich, 'Ein Heiligtum der Artemis Metapontina? Zur Ikonographie der Terrakottafiguren von S. Biagio bei Metapont', *Parola di Passato* 31 (1976), pp. 376–408; M. Giangiulio, 'Per la storia dei culti di Crotone antica: Il santuario di Hera Lacinia. Structure e funzioni culturali, origini storiche e mitiche', *Archivio Storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 49 (1982), pp. 5–69; J. C. Carter, 'Sanctuaries in the chora of Metaponto', in S. E. Alcock and R. Osborne (eds), *Placing the Gods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 161–98; D. Giacometti, 'Il culto di Artemis a Metaponto', *Ostraka* 8 (1999), pp. 407–26; A. de Siena, 'Profilo storico archeologico', in A. de Siena (ed.), *Metaponto: Archeologia di una colonia Greca* (Taranto: Scorpione Editore, 2001), pp. 7–44.

42 R. Merkelbach, 'Bakchylides auf einen Sieger in den 'Ἡμεράσια zu Lousoi', *ZPE* 11 (1973), pp. 257–60, argued that the victory was not at the Pythian games, but at the Hemerasia of Lousoi. A. Köhnken, 'Hemerasi- oder Pythiensieg? Zu Bakchylides, ep. 11', *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* 2 (1990), pp. 49–51, offers persuasive arguments in favour of the Pythian games.

Nūn δ' Ἀρτεμις ἀγροτέρα  
 χρυσαλάκατος λιπαρὸν  
 [Ἡμ]έρα τοξόκλυτος νίκαν ἔδωκε.<sup>43</sup>

Now Artemis of the wilds with spindle of gold, gentle, famed for the bow gave (sc. to Alexidamos) a brilliant victory.

Furthermore, by asserting that it was Artemis herself who gave the victory to young Alexidamos, Bacchylides may have been alluding to the distinctly Homeric role the gods played at the athletic contests. Mikalson analysed the instances in epinician odes and dedicatory epigrams in which poets claim that the gods themselves bestowed victory on the contestants.<sup>44</sup> He concluded that poets of the classical period rarely attribute victory to the gods but, when they do so, it is usually the deity of the festival or the competition itself that provides the aid to the victor. He singles out the eleventh ode of Bacchylides as a unique example where it is not the deity presiding over the contest that bestows victory, but the deity of the competitor's homeland.<sup>45</sup> The only other instance of gods who are not presiding over the games nevertheless helping humans win the contest is *Iliad* 23.<sup>46</sup> Only after this distinctly Homeric introduction and characterization does Artemis receive her local epithet, *Hēmera* ('tame'), in Bacchylides' eleventh ode.

The poet goes on to relate the foundation-myth of the cult of Artemis in Lousoi, which was brought to Metapontion by its Achaeans

43 Text: Irigoin.

44 J. D. Mikalson, 'Gods and athletic games', in O. Palagia and A. Choremi-Spetsieri (eds), *The Panathenaic Games* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), pp. 33–40.

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 38–9.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 33, rightly asserts that Homeric instances of divine intervention do not provide an apt parallel for the analysis of the passages where Pindar and Bacchylides praise the victories of their contemporaries. I agree that this is the case with most of the passages he discusses, since in them the gods do not randomly appear in order to support their favourites, but the divinities presiding over the games bestow victory on the contestants. However, Bacchylides 11 is a striking exception. Here Artemis seems to be assuming the role of the Homeric divine helper, since she is not presiding over the games and yet bestows victory on Alexidamos. Furthermore, Bacchylides is actually implying that there was something akin to the dispute of the gods regarding Alexidamos' contests, since he says that the boy nearly missed an Olympian victory due to either 'a god or a wandering judgement of men who took the highest honour out of his hands' (34–6). According to Mikalson, the classical poets never ascribe defeat to the gods (*ibid.*, p. 34: 'In the rhetoric of the classical period, the gods give victory; they do not cause defeat'). However, he also asserts that Homeric gods both give victory and cause defeat (p. 33), which brings me to the conclusion that Bacchylides is using a Homeric model of the divine engagement in the athletic contest in his eleventh ode.

founders.<sup>47</sup> The final section of the poem, line 117 (*chrusea despoina laôn*, ‘golden mistress of the people’), could perhaps even be observed as a pun on the Homeric depiction of the goddess as *potnia thêrôn* (from the *Iliad*) or *potna thea* (from the *Odyssey*). In Bacchylides’ ode, Artemis is not only the mistress of animals, but also the mistress of the citizens. One wonders why it was necessary for a poet depicting a local city goddess to reach for Homeric epithets, especially since, in Homer, Artemis has very little to do with cities and city life.

In his treatment of Artemis as a city goddess, Bacchylides is adopting a strategy similar to that of Anakreon. In one tantalizing fragment, which was probably the beginning of a longer poem, Anakreon is entreating Artemis Leukophryênê, the main goddess of Magnesia on the Maeander (fr. 348 Page):

γουνούμαί σ’ ἐλαφιβόλε  
 ξανθῇ παῖ Διὸς ἀργείων  
 δέσποιν’ Ἄρτεμι θηρῶν·  
 ἥ κου νῦν ἐπὶ Ληθαίου  
 δίνησι θρασυκαρδίων  
 ἀνδρῶν ἐσκατορᾶς πόλιν  
 χαίρους’, οὐ γὰρ ἀνημέρους  
 ποιμαίνεις πολήτας.

I appeal to you, fair-haired, deer-shooting daughter of Zeus,  
 Artemis, queen of game: with pleasure, surely, now you look  
 upon the valiant population of the town by the river Lethaios,  
 for the citizens in your flock are anything but uncouth.<sup>48</sup>

Here, Artemis is invoked with her usual Homeric epithets pertaining to her genealogy and hunting as her area of influence. She is *elaphêbolos* (‘deer-shooting’), blonde daughter of Zeus and a mistress of wild animals, but she is also depicted as a city goddess, protector of all citizens. Anakreon is playing with the idea of Artemis as mistress of wild animals even as he depicts her as a city goddess, using the verb *poimainô* (‘to herd, tend’) in order to qualify the goddess’ relationship with her citizens.<sup>49</sup>

47 On this see D. Cairns, ‘Myth and the polis in Bacchylides’ eleventh ode’, *JHS* 125 (2005), pp. 35–50, and B. Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods: Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 267–327.

48 Translation: Furley and Bremer.

49 Cf. W. D. Furley and J. M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), I, p. 178: ‘This opening contains gracious praise of the city of Magnesia, expressed through the witty device of saying: “Artemis loves wild animals; but she surely smiles on Magnesia because its citizens are anything but wild”.’

The important question here is: why would poets who are depicting distinctly local characteristics of deities for local audiences allude to the Homeric characterization of the divinity – a characterization which, as we saw previously, does not really correspond to cult practice? It seems that the depiction of gods in poetry demanded a careful negotiation of their identity with respect to their Homeric personae.

We have seen that in the archaic and classical period, the Homeric characterization of Artemis seems to dominate her depiction in poetry, even if the texts are dealing with local cults which have little or nothing to do with the Homeric Artemis. To a degree, it was possible to merge the Homeric goddess with the local Artemis, and to adapt the picture of the goddess to the cultic reality through careful negotiation of her local and Homeric characteristics. It is a great pity that such a vast number of texts is lost to us, especially choral lyric, which would certainly have provided many interesting depictions of Artemis. However, on the basis of what we have, apart from the two texts we mentioned where Artemis is depicted as a city goddess, in archaic and classical poetry she is primarily a virginal huntress, quick to punish her followers for the loss of virginity, and those who endanger her chastity, neglect her sacrifices or insult Leto.

In the Hellenistic period, however, an important change in the perception of Artemis takes place: the cities of Asia Minor undergo a renaissance as the centre of gravity in the Greek world shifts eastwards. These cities profited from economic growth after Alexander's conquests, and with increased economical prosperity came growing cultural influence. Countless inscriptions testify to their attempts to propagate the city cults, so much so that their efforts have been compared to the religious zeal of the Christian missionaries.<sup>50</sup> Thus in the third century BC, the cult of Artemis the protector of cities spread rapidly throughout Asia and became prominent in Lydia, Caria, Ionia, Phrygia, Lycia, Pamphylia and Cilicia.

With the era of Athenian literary supremacy over, new capitals, especially Alexandria, flourished and attracted intellectuals from all over Greece. One of the most famous poets and scholars working in Alexandria in the first half of the third century BC was Callimachus of Cyrene. It is his *Hymn to Artemis* I wish to discuss now in order to demonstrate how this poet adapted the literary persona of Artemis to fit her contemporary cult.<sup>51</sup> This intention may come as a surprise,

50 R. E. Oster, 'Ephesus as a religious center under the principate. I: Paganism before Constantine', *ANRW* II, 18, 3 (1990), pp. 1661–728.

51 For a fuller analysis of the representation of the cult of Artemis in Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*, see Petrovic, *Artemiskult*, pp. 114–263.

since Hellenistic poetry is often considered to be largely detached from any religious setting. Modern scholarship usually asserts that myths were for Hellenistic poets no more than traditional stories, and that Hellenistic poets treated gods basically as fictional literary characters, displaying little or no interest in the religious tendencies of their own time. But if we pay close attention to the way Callimachus portrays Artemis, we shall see that this is a misconception.

By Callimachus' time, the goddess Artemis as found in cult practice had outgrown her canonical literary representation. Homer's insolent girl was in the third century BC one of the most important goddesses of the richest part of Greece. She was now the mistress of cities, and so her literary image needed to be revamped. In my opinion, Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* provides us with a unique opportunity to witness one such literary makeover. Literary representation of the goddess had to be updated, but one could not simply dismiss the poems which had for centuries been perceived as canonical in their depiction of the gods, their origins and their spheres of influence. What Callimachus did instead was a brilliant turning of the tables – he simply wrote a new *Homeric Hymn*.

The corpus of *Homeric Hymns* celebrates and describes individual gods. The characterization of the gods in the hymns was very important and influential for their portrayal in Greek literature. Along with the epics, the *Homeric Hymns* literally created the Panhellenic personalities of divinities. This is especially the case with the four long hymns, which contain epic narratives of the important episodes in the life of the gods and present their most important cult places and areas of influence.<sup>52</sup> Callimachus, using this genre as a model, went back to the very childhood of Artemis in order to rewrite her biography, and thereby adapt the literature to the contemporary state of the cult.<sup>53</sup>

The hymn opens with a delightful scene – little Artemis is sitting

52 On the presentation of the gods in the *Homeric Hymns*, see J. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus: Form and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2006<sup>2</sup>).

53 A. Ambühl, *Kinder und Junge Helden: Innovative Aspekte des Umgangs mit der literarischen Tradition bei Kallimachos* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), discusses Callimachus' strategy of rewriting the earlier texts. Her excellent discussion of the *Hymn to Artemis* interprets several important hypotexts and their appropriation by Callimachus (pp. 245–95): Artemis from the *Iliad*, Nausikaa from the *Odyssey*, Euripides' Iphigeneia and Hestia from the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, as well as masculine 'rivals' of the goddess – Apollo from the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and Achilles and Herakles in Pindar's odes. However, her analysis seeks to throw more light on Callimachus' poetic procedure and his own positioning in Greek poetry and rivalry with the poetic predecessors. I shall try to elucidate Callimachus' rewriting of earlier texts with an emphasis on the goddess' role and presentation in cult.

on Zeus' knees and asking for various presents in the manner of a precocious child. Her list is quite long: she wants many things, and she wants them immediately. She demands a virginal status, many cult epithets, arrows and a bow, a short tunic so that she can hunt; she wants nymphs, all the mountains. As far as cities are concerned, any will do, since she will rarely descend to the towns, save to help women at childbirth. This scene is a clever reworking of the episode from the book 21 of the *Iliad* – it is now appropriate for the goddess to sit in Zeus' lap, since she is a little girl. It also draws heavily on the typical representation of young Olympians, who know what their spheres should be the moment they are born. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the god literally leaps out of his mother's womb and immediately announces (131–2): 'I want the lyre and the crooked bow as my things. And I shall prophesy Zeus' unerring will to humankind.' Thus Artemis is made to resemble her brother, a precocious offspring of the gods.<sup>54</sup>

Everything Artemis demands in her speech agrees with her traditional literary representation. However, Zeus' answer is a rather innovative one (31–9):

Have all that you want so badly, my girl, and other presents bigger still your father will give you – not just a single tower, but thirty cities for your own: thirty cities that won't know how to worship anyone but you, and be the towns of Artemis. Many another will be yours to share with other gods, inland cities, islands too, and in them all will groves and altars of Artemis abound, and you will be Protectress of Streets and Harbours. (tr. Nisetich)

Needless to say, the depiction of Artemis as a goddess of many cities is unusual and has no precedent in earlier literature. Modern scholarship has ascribed this oddity to Callimachus' innovative spirit and perceived it as yet another attempt by the poet to surprise his readers with unexpected versions of myths. The notion of Artemis as city goddess is thus explained away as Callimachus' playful and eccentric invention.

However, if we take the cults of Artemis into account, the explanation for the addition of cities to Artemis' list becomes rather simple:

54 It has often been noted that sibling rivalry is one of the main motifs of Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*. See on this P. Bing and V. Uhrmeister, 'The unity of Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*', *JHS* 114 (1994), pp. 19–34; R. L. Hunter and T. Fuhrer, 'Imaginary gods? Poetic theology in the *Hymns* of Callimachus', in F. Montanari and L. Lehnus (eds), *Callimache* (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 2002), pp. 143–87; M. Plantinga, 'A parade of learning: Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* (Lines 170–268)', in M. A. Harder et al. (eds), *Callimachus II* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp. 257–78; Ambühl, *Kinder und Junge Helden*.

Callimachus is literally re-creating the canonical character of the goddess in order for it to fit cultic reality. In order to bestow on Artemis the power to protect cities, the poet had to start at the very beginning, with the goddess' childhood. Artemis does not express a wish to own cities herself – in fact she professes her utter lack of interest in cities and their inhabitants.<sup>55</sup> It is Zeus who bestows this gift on her. In presenting one sphere of Artemis' influence as a direct wish of Zeus, Callimachus is again resorting to a conventional device of the *Homeric Hymns*. In the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, for instance, Hermes manifests several abilities and interests from birth, but it is Zeus who bestows on him additional spheres of influence and proclaims that he will have the gift of prophecy, that all flocks will belong to him and that he will be appointed messenger to Hades (568ff).

Note also how Zeus stresses and repeats the very number of cities in Callimachus' hymn (33–5): 'Not just a single tower, but thirty cities for your own: thirty cities that won't know how to worship anyone but you, and be the towns of Artemis.' Here Callimachus is effectively correcting the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, where Artemis only has *one* city of just men.

This scene is only the first step in Callimachus' representation of Artemis as the goddess of cities. He also explains how exactly Artemis watches over her cities. She punishes the unjust, and rewards the just cities (120–35):

You shot first at an elm tree, second at an oak, third at an animal, and fourth at no oak: but a city of criminals was your target now, people guilty, over and over, of sins against each other, sins against strangers. Fools, they have your wrath to contend with now, a bitter dough to swallow. Pestilence feeds on their livestock, frost nips at their crops, their old men shear their hair in grief for sons dead, their women die blasted in childbirth or, escaping, bear not one child able to stand up straight. Not so the ones on whom you smile and show your favour, whose fields bring forth abundant grain, whose cattle multiply, whose homes flourish. Only bodies full of years are carried to their funerals. Strife that tears to pieces even the well-run household leaves their families untouched. Around a single table loaded with offerings, wives of brothers and husbands of sisters take their seats.

55 Cf. 18f.: δὸς δέ μοι οὐρεα πάντα· πόλιν δέ μοι ἦντινα νεῖμον / ἦντινα λῆς· σπαρνὸν γὰρ ὅτ' Ἀρτεμις ὅστω κάτεισιν ('And give me all the mountains to roam – whatever city you want me to have is fine with me: it won't be often Artemis comes to town').



By punishing the unjust and rewarding the just cities, Artemis effectively demonstrates that she has accepted her father's gift. She also proves herself to be a true daughter of her father, since she is acting exactly as he does in an earlier text: this depiction of the goddess in action is a reworking and adaptation of Hesiod's representation of Zeus in the *Works and Days* (225–47),<sup>56</sup> where Hesiod describes Zeus' treatment of the just and unjust rulers and their respective cities. However, even though Artemis and Zeus have the same rewards and punishments in their stock, Artemis is obviously quicker to punish, since Callimachus first describes how she treats the unjust citizens, whereas Hesiod begins with the rewards for the just. This, I think, is Callimachus' nod to the literary persona of the goddess and to the countless myths in which Artemis cruelly punishes everyone who dares to insult her in any way. The goddess has changed, but not completely. Thus Hesiod's epic, too, is being reworked and adapted to the contemporary situation. It is no longer only Zeus who watches over the cities: his daughter has joined him, since he has bestowed his competences on her.

After the poet has explained how Artemis became the goddess of the cities and how she watches over them, he exemplifies her role by describing at length the foundation of her most important cult centre, Ephesos (237–58):

Even the Amazons, lovers of violence, once set up a wooden image in your honour, under an oak by the sea in Ephesos, and Hippo performed the sacrifice, and then they danced, Lady Oupis, a war dance around it, first in armour, holding their shields, then fanning out in wide choral rings, and music played, to keep the songs bursting from their throats in unison, the high thin wail of reed pipes (it was before people had learned to hollow out the bones of fawns, an art of Athena's hateful to deer): and the echo sped to Sardis, to the Berekynthian meadow, the rapid thud of their feet, the rattle of their quivers answering. And later, around that wooden image, rose a spacious sanctuary – dawn will never look upon a godlier or richer one: it would put Pytho in the shade.

56 As noted by F. Bornmann, *Callimachi Hymnus in Dianam: Introduzione, testo critico e commento* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1968), ad 129–35. See on this also H. Reinsch-Werner, 'Kallimachos Hesiodicus: Die Rezeption der hesiodischen Dichtung durch Kallimachos von Kyrene', dissertation, Berlin, Nikolaus Mielke, 1976, pp. 74–86; Bing and Uhrmeister, 'The unity of Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*', p. 25; Ambühl, *Kinder und Junge Helden*, pp. 245–95.

With that in mind, no doubt, Lygdamis threatened to plunder it, his wits gone, his heart full of outrage. He came with a host of mare-milking Kimmerians, equal in number to the sands, those men who sprawl along the Bosporos, the strait of the cowgirl, daughter of Inachos. How far from the mark he was, that fumbling king who was not destined – neither he nor any of those whose wagons crowded the meadow of Kayster – to go home again! Thus do your arrows guard Ephesos for ever.<sup>57</sup>

The shrine of Artemis in Ephesos is compared to Apollo's in Delphi, which it would easily outdo (250). Importantly, for a proper city deity, a description is given of how exactly Artemis takes care of Ephesos – she defends it from the Cimmerian invasion. This episode recalls the Gallic invasion of Delphi and Apollo's defence of his shrine.

The very structure of the hymn to Artemis recalls the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, since the first part depicts Artemis as a child and her first endeavours, then the poet depicts Artemis entering the Olympian halls and her acceptance by other gods, and the second part of the hymn enumerates her favourite nymphs, islands and cities, and depicts the founding of the Ephesian shrine. Just like the poet of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Callimachus first presents Artemis as a child, then as a fully fledged Olympian goddess who visits Olympus and is accepted by other gods, and then he goes on to enumerate her most important cult places and epithets.<sup>58</sup>

By combining the Homeric depiction of Artemis as a virginal huntress with her depiction as a powerful, just deity of the cities, the poet is not only adapting the literary goddess to the Artemis of contemporary cult, he is also rewriting the texts of his predecessors. Callimachus is at the same time playing according to the rules of the genre of *Homeric Hymns* and breaking those rules, inasmuch as he is actually correcting and rewriting them. He is writing himself into the Homeric tradition and is bestowing on Artemis a portrayal worthy of her status and significance. But, in his reshaping of the literary persona of Artemis, Callimachus had to reach into the ancient, canonical reservoir of literary motifs. He also adopted a markedly Panhellenic perspective, since he did not concentrate on one myth or cult of the goddess, but attempted to draw an all-encompassing picture of Artemis and to mention as many cult places and legends as possible.

The identities and functions of the gods in Greek society were subject to change. Depicting gods in poetry was often a balancing act

<sup>57</sup> Translation: Nisetich, slightly modified.

<sup>58</sup> Bing and Uhrmeister, 'The unity of Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*'.

which demanded a careful negotiation of their identities, a negotiation which is often dismissed as experimentation or playful invention in the current scholarship on Hellenistic poetry. The interest in local cults and arcane rituals displayed by Hellenistic poets is often interpreted as a display of learning or even antiquarianism. However, it is interesting to note that, when it comes to depicting the functions and the characters of the gods, the actual inventors were not the Hellenistic poets, but Homer and Hesiod.

# HERAKLES BETWEEN GODS AND HEROES

*Emma Stafford*

One way of getting at the question with which this volume begins, ‘what is a Greek god?’, is to consider figures whose divine status is in some kind of doubt. In this chapter I review the case of Herakles, whose special status as something in between a god and a hero has exercised scholars from antiquity to the present day. Most recently the debate has focused particularly on cult practice, looking at Herakles in the light of broader discussion of the traditional Olympian–chthonian opposition, and of the extent to which ritual reflects the character of its recipient. There are, however, other elements apart from ritual which need to be taken into account in an assessment of Herakles’ character, and what I aim to do here is to offer an overview of the criteria by which he has been categorized on the hero-to-god scale, and to consider the extent to which such categorizations help us appreciate what Herakles actually meant to an ancient Greek worshipper.<sup>1</sup>

## GOD OR HERO?

To begin with it is worth going back to basics and reviewing the defining features we might look for in a Greek hero. In mythological

<sup>1</sup> This chapter draws on preparatory work for my forthcoming monograph *Herakles*, in Routledge’s ‘Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World’ series. I discuss the question of ritual in more detail in ‘Héraklès: encore et toujours le problème du *heros theos*’, *Kernos* 18 (2005), pp. 391–406, which engages especially with the work of Annie Verbanck-Piérard and Stella Georgoudi: A. Verbanck-Piérard, ‘Le double culte d’Héraklès: légende ou réalité?’, in A.-F. Laurens (ed.), *Entre hommes et dieux: le convive, le héros, le prophète* (Besançon and Paris: Belles Lettres, 1989), pp. 43–65; P. Lévêque and A. Verbanck-Piérard, ‘Héraclès héros ou dieu?’, in C. Bonnet and C. Jourdain-Annequin (eds), *Héraclès: d’une rive à l’autre de la Méditerranée: bilan et perspectives* (Brussels and Rome: Institut Belge de Rome, 1992), pp. 43–65; and S. Georgoudi, ‘Héraclès dans les pratiques sacrificielles des cités’, in C. Bonnet et al. (eds), *Le Bestiaire d’Héraclès: IIIe Rencontre Héracléenne* (Liège: CIERGA, 1998), pp. 301–17.

terms we might take parentage as a starting point, and decide that Herakles' combination of a divine father and mortal mother is a good heroic qualification, on the same model as Perseus, Theseus, Achilles, Sarpedon and many others. A life filled with monster-slaying and the establishment of several royal lines and institutions like the Olympic Games likewise fits Herakles for the recognizable classes of culture hero and hero *archêgetês*. Where he fails to conform to the heroic pattern, however, is of course in his post-mortem acquisition of immortality, and in the Panhellenic reach of his popularity. This can be seen, in terms of myth, in the proliferation of stories attaching locations from end to end of the Mediterranean with the travels involved in Herakles' Labours. In terms of cult, whereas a 'normal' hero is conceived of as dead, and his sphere of influence centres on his grave, Herakles' conspicuous lack of a tomb is mirrored by a lack of localization of his cult.

Herakles is not, of course, the only figure who does not quite conform to the rules. Dionysos manages to be a fully established god despite having a mortal mother (Semele). Asklepios has the right kind of mixed parentage (Apollo and the mortal Koronis), and like Herakles seems to be regarded as a hero in Homer, but gets promoted to divine status in terms of cult practice and subsequent Panhellenic appeal.<sup>2</sup> The Dioskouroi are particularly difficult to pin down because of varying accounts of their paternity – sometimes Pollux is fathered by Zeus and Castor by Tyndareos, making one immortal and the other mortal, but sometimes both are the progeny of the same father. There is also the possibility of local variation, exemplified by the Dioskouroi's sister Helen, again of slightly problematic parentage, whose usual status as a heroine is confused by reports of a divine cult at Sparta.<sup>3</sup> Achilles, Ajax, Diomedes and

2 I consider Asklepios' cult in more detail elsewhere: 'Cocks to Asklepios: sacrificial practice and healing cult', in V. Mehl and P. Brulé (eds), *Le sacrifice antique* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), pp. 205–21. See also E. J. Edelstein and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1945), I, T1–122 with vol. II, pp. 1–64 (on Asklepios' heroic myth) and vol. I, T232–65 with vol. II, pp. 91–101 (on his deification); J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 255–7 (Asklepios' origin).

3 See Herodotus 6.61 for the goddess Helen's shrine, complete with a statue, at Therapne. For the variant accounts of the Dioskouroi and Helen's parentage, see T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 318–21. J. Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 183–95, discusses Herakles alongside the 'anomalous immortals' Ino-Leukothea, the Dioskouroi and Helen, and Asklepios.

Amphiaraos are likewise occasionally referred to as gods in particular locations.<sup>4</sup>

I shall be arguing that Herakles is different from all of these figures in one really crucial respect, but first let us take a quick look at some ancient comments on the question of Herakles' status. Although both the heroic myth and the apotheosis story are well established by the early sixth century at the latest, the earliest possible articulation of the resultant ambiguity is Pindar's reference (*Nemean* 3.22) to Herakles as *hērōs theos*. Bremmer has argued that *hērōs* here is an archaizing title rather than the deliberate setting up of an opposition,<sup>5</sup> but I cannot believe that an early fifth-century audience would not have been struck by the paradoxical juxtaposition. Herodotus (2.44) takes the question up at some length as part of his excursus on the Egyptian origins of the Greek gods, concluding that there was a very ancient Egyptian-cum-Phoenician god called Herakles, whose name was adopted by the Greek Herakles, 'the son of Amphytryon':

And it seems to me that the most correct practice is that of those Greeks who have founded and maintain two Herakles-sanctuaries, in one of which they sacrifice (*thuein*) as to an immortal, with an Olympian name, and in the other they sacrifice (*enagizein*) as to a hero.

The account is less than entirely logical, but does seem to be an attempt on Herodotus' part to explain why two different kinds of sacrificial ritual are found for Herakles, one suitable for a god, the other for a hero – a distinction to which we will return shortly.<sup>6</sup> Other writers suggest that it is a question of a *change* of status, from hero to god. Isocrates (5.33) credits the Athenians slightly obscurely with having 'contributed to Herakles' immortality', which may well be a reference to the hero's initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries prior to his descent to the Underworld. Diodorus (4.39.1) more prosaically has the Athenians being the first to recognize Herakles' divinity in cult practice, setting an example for the rest of the world, and elsewhere

4 For references, see J. Bremmer, 'The rise of the hero cult and the new Simonides', *ZPE* 158 (2006), pp. 15–26 at 20 with nn. 57–63. See also below n. 34 on Amphiaraos.

5 Bremmer, 'Rise of the hero cult', p. 18.

6 For discussion of this passage see e.g. Verbanck-Piérard, 'Le double culte d'Héraklès', pp. 46–7, and G. Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 12 (Athens and Liège: CIERGA, 2002), pp. 85–6. It should be noted that elsewhere Herodotus (5.114) uses the apparently contradictory phrase 'thuein as to a hero' of one Onesilos, a man who died in the Cypriot revolt against the Persians.

(4.8.5) attributes his promotion either to the human agency of 'our ancestors', in recognition of his *aretê*, or (4.10.7) to the gods, as a reward for the Twelve Labours. On a more reflective level, Cicero (*On the Nature of the Gods* 3.18.45) is the earliest of a number of writers to group Herakles with Asklepios, Dionysos and the Dioskouroi as figures about whom one might 'have doubt', but seems to take the extent of their worship as a deciding factor in allowing them to count as gods, albeit with mortal mothers. Lucian (*Jupiter Tragoedus* 21) nicely parodies such debate in his conceit that Herakles and others are 'resident aliens' amongst the gods.

The difficulty with all of these direct comments on Herakles' status is of course their generally speculative nature and the authors' particular agendas. In order to get a sense of what the 'man in the agora' might have thought on the subject, we need to get back first to the evidence of cult practice in specific locations, and then to some aspects of Herakles' myth.

## CULT

The usefulness or otherwise of ritual as a diagnostic of heroic or divine status has been much debated of late.<sup>7</sup> It is becoming generally agreed that the traditional opposition between Olympian and chthonian ritual does not really work for the archaic and classical periods, although a straightforward account of the two types of sacrifice, and related vocabulary, is still to be found in the English translation of Burkert's *Greek Religion* (1985, pp. 199–203), which might be summarized as in Table 12.1.

The very limited extent to which this theoretical distinction can actually be applied to specific locations has been demonstrated especially in connection with the Attic deme calendars, where it seems that heroes are much more commonly in receipt of the regular kind of *thusia* sacrifice, including feasting, than of any type of destruction sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

7 An early stage of the modern debate is represented by R. Schlesier, 'Olympian versus chthonian religion', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 11 (1991–2), pp. 38–51, reprinted (in German) in R. Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), pp. 21–32. More recent contributors include S. Scullion (below, n. 9), A. Verbanck-Piérard and G. Ekroth (below, n. 8); for a convenient overview, see the latter's 'Heroes and hero-cults', in D. Ogden (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 100–14. Specifically on sacrifice, see most recently the papers collected in R. Hägg and B. Alroth (eds), *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian* (Stockholm: Paul Åström, 2005); also R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Hero Cult* (Stockholm: Paul Åström, 1999).

8 See A. Verbanck-Piérard, 'Héros attiques au jour le jour: les calendriers des deme', in V. Pirenne-Delforge (ed.), *Les panthéons des cités, des origines à la*

Table 12.1 Traditional Olympian–chthonian opposition and vocabulary

|                   | Olympian rituals for the gods                          | Chthonian rituals for heroes, the dead, etc.                                                             |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Place of worship  | Temple ( <i>naos</i> ) + raised altar ( <i>bōmos</i> ) | Sanctuary at site of the tomb ( <i>hērōon</i> ) + low hearth ( <i>eschara</i> )/ditch ( <i>bothros</i> ) |
| Form of sacrifice | Followed by a shared feast ( <i>thusia</i> )           | Animal destroyed, not eaten ( <i>enagisma</i> )                                                          |

None the less, there are some interesting variations within the *thusia* ritual, some of which have potential as possible indicators of hero cult. Scott Scullion has proposed, for example, that the injunction *ou phora* ('not to be taken away'), quite commonly found in sacrificial regulations, might be particularly characteristic of hero cult, and has identified a whole category of *moirocaust*, or 'partial destruction' sacrifices, which might have allowed some recognition of the recipient's mortal or chthonian aspects while at the same time allowing the consumption of a good proportion of the meat.<sup>9</sup> The evidence for the link between these particular kinds of ritual and particular kinds of recipient is far from conclusive, but it is certainly worth considering.<sup>10</sup>

In Herakles' case, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>11</sup> there are a number of locations where we see some of these partial-destruction rituals. At Sikyon, Pausanias (2.10.1) records a ritual in which portions of sacrificed lambs are burnt for Herakles as *enagismata* 'as to a hero', while the rest of the meat is sacrificed (*thuein*) 'as to a god'. The *aition* he provides attributes a change of practice, from heroic to divine ritual,

(footnote 8 *continued*)

Périégèse de Pausanias = *Kernos*, Suppl. 8 (Athens and Liège: CIERGA, 1998), pp. 109–27, and Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*. Cf. A. Verbanck-Piérard, 'Les héros guérisseurs: des dieux comme les autres!', in V. Pirenne-Delforge and E. Suárez de la Torre (eds), *Héros et héroïnes dans les mythes et cultes grecques* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 10 (Athens and Liège: CIERGA, 2000), pp. 281–332; G. Ekroth, 'Pausanias and the sacrificial rituals of Greek cult', in Hägg, *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, pp. 145–58.

<sup>9</sup> S. Scullion, 'Olympian and chthonian', *Classical Antiquity* 13 (1994), pp. 75–119, and 'Heroic and chthonian sacrifice: new evidence from Selinous', *ZPE* 132 (2000), pp. 163–71.

<sup>10</sup> R. Parker, 'hōs hērōi enagízein', in Hägg and Alroth, *Greek Sacrificial Ritual*, p. 42, offers cautious support for *ou phora* as possibly indicative of, though not confined to, hero cult. *Contra*: Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*, pp. 313–25.

<sup>11</sup> Stafford, 'Hēraklēs . . . heros theos'. Apart from Larson's brief overview (pp. 183–7), there has been no overall account of Herakles' cult since L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921), which has inevitably been superseded on points of detail.



to the intervention of a Cretan called Phaistos, and although this is not entirely logical – the Sikyonians should now be giving Herakles unequivocally divine sacrifice rather than compromising – it does suggest that Pausanias found the ritual in need of explanation. It is possible that sacrifice involving the destruction of part or all of the victim was a local peculiarity of Sikyon, since, as Pirenne-Delforge points out, a little further on (2.10.5) Pausanias records a ritual for Aphrodite in which ‘they incinerate (*kathagizein*) the rest with juniper logs, but together with the burning thighs they incinerate (*synkathagizein*) the leaves of lad’s love’.<sup>12</sup> None the less the account does demonstrate that Pausanias, like Herodotus, could countenance different types of ritual correlating with different beliefs about Herakles’ status.

On the island of Thasos, Herakles was a major figure in the local pantheon, regularly featuring on Thasian coins and, according to epigraphic evidence, in receipt of an annual festival, which included athletic contests.<sup>13</sup> His substantial sanctuary in Thasos town included extensive dining facilities even in its archaic phase, a temple was added in the fifth century, and animal remains from the sanctuary show traces of the kind of butchers’ cuts one would expect in the division of meat from a regular *thusia* sacrifice.<sup>14</sup> The original excavators’ identification of an *eschara* and *bothros* for heroic rituals has been discredited, but there remain two inscriptions containing the intriguing verb *enateuein*, which has been plausibly compared to a phrase in the well-known sacred law from Selinous and interpreted as indicating the

12 V. Pirenne-Delforge, ‘Les rites sacrificiels dans la Périégèse de Pausanias’, in D. Knoepfler and M. Piérart (eds), *Editer, traduire, commenter Pausanias en l’an 2000* (Geneva: Université de Neuchâtel, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 2001), pp. 119–21. Cf. Pirenne-Delforge, this volume, Chapter 19.

13 Coins: Y. Grandjean and F. Salviat, *Guide de Thasos* (Paris: De Boccard, 2000<sup>2</sup>), pp. 306–13 figs. 271–83. Inscriptions: F. Salviat, ‘Une nouvelle loi thasienne: institutions judiciaires et fêtes religieuses à la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> s. av. J-C’, *BCH* 82 (1958), pp. 193–267; J. Pouilloux, *Recherches sur l’histoire et les cultes de Thasos I* (Paris: De Boccard, 1954), no. 141.

14 The archaeology of the sanctuary is conveniently summarized in Grandjean and Salviat, *Guide de Thasos*, p. 142 figs. 94–6. Fundamental earlier studies are: M. Launey, *Le sanctuaire et le culte d’Hérakès à Thasos* (Paris: De Boccard, 1944); Pouilloux, *Recherches*, and ‘L’Héraclès thasien’, *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 76 (1974), pp. 305–16. Important re-evaluations of the archaeological material are: B. Bergquist, *Herakles on Thasos = Boreas 5* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1973), and ‘Feasting of worshippers or temple and sacrifice? The case of Herakleion on Thasos’, in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult-Practice from the Archaeological Evidence* (Stockholm: Paul Åström, 1998), pp. 57–72; J. des Courtils and A. Pariente, ‘Excavations in the Heracles sanctuary at Thasos’, in R. Hägg et al. (eds) *Early Greek Cult Practice* (Stockholm: Paul Åström, 1988), pp. 121–3; and J. des Courtils et al., ‘Sacrifices d’animaux à l’Hérakleion de Thasos’, *BCH* 120 (1996), pp. 799–820.

sacrifice of a 'ninth part'.<sup>15</sup> The precise meaning of the two Thasian inscriptions has been the subject of considerable debate, but it seems fairly clear that this 'ninth-part' sacrifice was something to be expected in Herakles' cult on Thasos.<sup>16</sup>

From the island of Kos we have both an inscription from Kos town and Plutarch's account of a striking cross-dressing ritual at Antimacheia to suggest that Herakles was generally thought of in his divine aspect.<sup>17</sup> The sacred law, in particular, has him sharing a sanctuary with Hebe and Hera, at which mortal weddings were celebrated, presumably in emulation of Herakles' own *hieros gamos*. Plutarch does not make it explicit, but the same idea probably underlies the practice of the priest at Antimacheia, who 'puts on a woman's clothes, and ties on his head a woman's head-dress before he begins the sacrifice', and that of bridegrooms who 'welcome their brides having put on a woman's dress'. Against this, however, we might set the stipulations of a calendar which has a lamb sacrificed holocaust prior to the regular *thusia* sacrifice of an ox – the calendar also enjoins similar double sacrifices for Zeus Polieus and Zeus Machaneus, so that it is difficult to be sure of the significance of the holocaust here, but it does provide a kind of compromise-sacrifice parallel to the partial holocausts of Sikyon and Thasos.<sup>18</sup>

At Athens there should be no question of Herakles' divine status – as we have seen, the Athenians are supposed to have been the first to honour him as a god. None the less, it is possible that the Athenians themselves gave some thought to Herakles' in-between status in connection with his best-known sanctuary at Kynosarges, situated outside the city walls and particularly associated with *nothoi*, 'bastards', or sons of mixed Athenian and non-citizen marriages: according to Plutarch (*Themistokles* 1.2–3), an explicit connection was made between the *nothoi* and Herakles' 'bastard' status amongst the gods.<sup>19</sup>

15 Scullion, 'Heroic and chthonian sacrifice: new evidence from Selinous', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 132 (2000), pp. 163–71. Thasian inscriptions: *IG* XII Suppl. 414 = *LSS* 63 (sacred law from the agora); *IG* XII Suppl. 353 (garden lease). Selinous inscription: M. H. Jameson et al., *A 'lex sacra' from Selinous* = *GRBS* Monographs 11 (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1993).

16 See most recently B. Bergquist, 'A restudy of two Thasian instances of *enateuein*', in Hägg and Alroth, *Greek Sacrificial Ritual*, pp. 61–70.

17 *LSCG* 177 (sacred law); Plutarch, *Greek Questions* 58 (304c–e). On Herakles' place in Koan cult, see S. M. Sherwin-White, *Ancient Cos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1978), pp. 317–20.

18 *LSCG* 151.C.8–15 = M. Segre, *Iscrizioni di Cos* (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1993), ED 140 pl. 37. See Georgoudi, 'Héraclès dans les pratiques sacrificielles', pp. 311–12; Jameson et al., 'Lex sacra', pp. 95–7; Scullion, 'Olympian and chthonian', pp. 93 and 106–7; Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*, pp. 218–20 and 225.

19 On the *nothoi* of Kynosarges, see e.g. C. B. Patterson, 'Those Athenian bastards', *Classical Antiquity* 9 (1990), pp. 40–73.

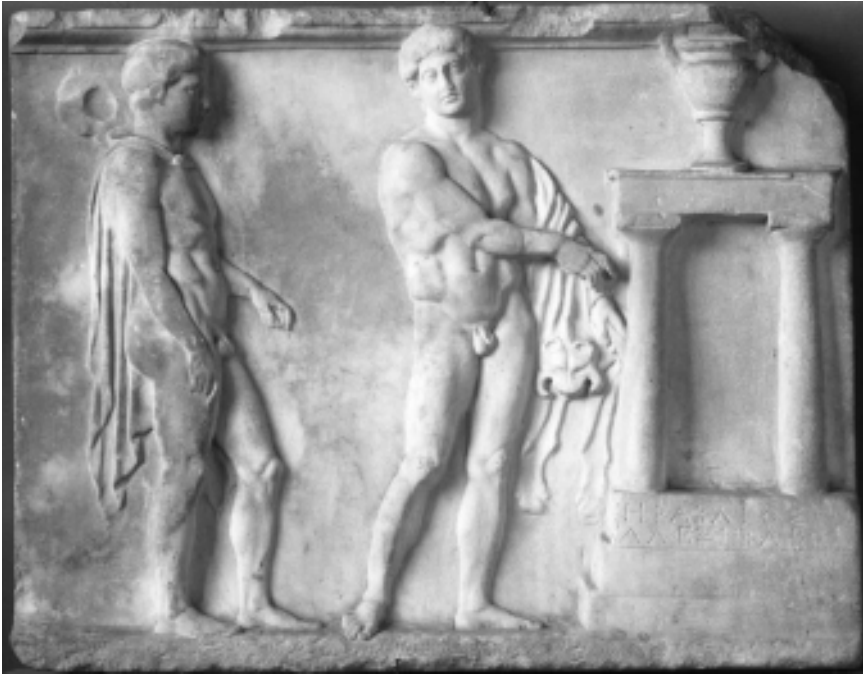


Figure 12.1 Hermes and Herakles Alexikakos by a four-column shrine. Attic votive relief, c.370 BC (Boston 96.696).

It is also striking that only at one of his several sanctuaries do we have any record of a regular temple and cult statue,<sup>20</sup> whereas the more usual form of building used for his worship appears to have been the four-column shrine (Fig. 12.1).<sup>21</sup> The unusual form of Herakles' Athenian shrines might be linkable with the tradition that he had inherited them from the unquestionably heroic Theseus, as referred to towards the end of Euripides' *Herakles* (1328–33):

THESEUS: Everywhere in my land they have given me precincts;  
they shall be yours henceforth, and, while you live, they will be

20 In the deme Melite, the statue of Herakles Alexikakos reputedly by the Argive sculptor Hageladas: S. Woodford, 'Herakles Alexikakos reviewed', *AJA* 80 (1976), pp. 291–4. For detailed discussion of the Athenian cult as a whole, see S. Woodford, 'Cults of Heracles in Attica', in D. G. Mitten et al. (eds), *Studies Presented to George M. A. Hanfmann* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, 1974), pp. 211–25; also M. Jameson, 'The family of Herakles in Attica', in L. Rawlings (ed.), *Herakles-Hercules in the Ancient World: Exploring a Greco-Roman divinity* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2005), pp. 15–36.

21 Representations of the four-column structure have been much discussed. For summaries of the debate, see F. T. van Straten, *Hiera kalá: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 88–9, and J. Boardman et al., s.v. 'Herakles', in *LIMC* IV (1988), pp. 801–2.



Figure 12.2 Holocaust sacrifice to Herakles? Attic red-figure oinochoe, circle of the Kadmos Painter, c.420–400 BC (Kiel B55).

called by your name amongst mortals; when you are dead and have gone to Hades, the whole city of Athens will honour you, with sacrifices (*thusiai*) and monuments in stone.

It is noteworthy that Theseus here makes no mention of Herakles' apotheosis, and quite explicitly places him after his death in Hades, although he does promise that the Athenians will offer him the regular kind of *thusia* sacrifice. There is just one bit of evidence which might indicate that Herakles sometimes received a different kind of sacrifice at Athens (Fig. 12.2). This oinochoe shows Herakles himself watching a priest and a youth pouring libations, while at their feet is a low mound with an ox's skull resting on top. Van Straten's interpretation of this as a holocaust scene has not won universal acceptance, but it is unusual as sacrifice scenes go.<sup>22</sup> The low mound, though not the skull, recurs in a couple of scenes in conjunction with the four-column shrine, in which

22 Van Straten, *Hierà kalá*, pp. 157–8 fig. 168. *Contra*: Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*, pp. 289–90 n. 377, cf. pp. 25–59 (on the *eschara*).



Figure 12.3 Herakles attended by gods at a four-column shrine. Attic red-figure bell krater, c.400–380 BC, name-vase of the Painter of Louvre G508 (Paris).

Herakles himself is once again reclining (Fig. 12.3). Here, however, he appears to be receiving divine visitors, including Athena and Hermes, so whatever kind of ritual the low mound might indicate, Herakles is being presented very much on an equal footing with the Olympians.<sup>23</sup>

So, even in locations where there is some possible indication of Herakles' heroic side being recognized in ritual, there is a good deal of equivocation in the picture – and there are plenty more locations where the cult evidence has nothing at all to say on the question of status, or speaks unambiguously of Herakles as a god.

### INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY IN THE HEROIC MYTH

If the cult evidence offers no definitive answer to the question of Herakles' status, then, let us now turn back to the more general indicators of Herakles' character that we might expect to see in his myth.<sup>24</sup>

23 There is a very similar scene on a contemporary krater (Musée Rodin TC1), and the combination of shrine and low mound recurs on a fourth-century votive relief from Eretria (Eretria 631): see *LIMC* 'Herakles' nos. 1373\*–4 and 1379. The scene on the vases has sometimes been identified, though not entirely convincingly, as the marriage of Hebe and Herakles, or Herakles at the crossroads: C. Picard, 'Nouvelles remarques sur l'apologue dit de Prodicos: Héraclès entre le vice et la vertu', *Revue Archéologique* 42 (1953), pp. 33–7 pls. 5–6.

24 Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, pp. 374–466, provides a systematic account of the sources for all elements of the story.

The sheer quantity of Herakles' heroic exploits could easily make us forget his claims to divine status altogether. All but one of the Twelve Labours, and most of the *parerga*, are already firmly established by 500 BC, and archaic art from all over the Greek world quite relentlessly presents us with Herakles the monster-slaying super-hero. Boardman estimates that images of Herakles account for half of all mythological scenes in surviving Attic black-figure – there are, for example, around 700 Nemean Lion scenes and 400 scenes of Herakles fighting the Amazons.<sup>25</sup> His monstrous opponents are often the offspring of divine parents, or minor deities like Triton, but some exploits pit Herakles directly against the Olympian gods, such as his tussle with Apollo over the Delphic tripod.<sup>26</sup> This alone would not lift him above the rank of hero – one only has to think of Diomedes' and Achilles' encounters with gods on the battlefield in the *Iliad* – but being enlisted to fight *on the gods' side* is another matter. The Gigantomachy is not narrated in surviving literature until Pindar (*Nemean* 1.67–72), but the motif of Herakles' involvement is certainly an archaic one, since the hero appears on a number of sixth-century vases pitching in alongside the gods.<sup>27</sup> Pindar juxtaposes the Gigantomachy with Herakles' happy afterlife on Olympos, perhaps implying that the one is the cause of the other, and Apollodorus (1.6) later provides an explicit rationale for Herakles' participation: only if the gods had a mortal fighting on their side would they overcome the Giants.

Some of Herakles' exploits lend themselves to interpretation as foreshadowing his immortality, notably the last two of the Labours.<sup>28</sup> It is not really clear from any ancient source exactly what properties the apples of the Hesperides were supposed to have – no one ever actually says they conveyed immortality – but the Meidias Painter's version of the scene of Herakles in the Garden does include the labelled figure of Hygieia, which certainly supports the notion of the Hesperides' Garden as an Eden-like place of well-being.<sup>29</sup> More

25 J. Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991<sup>2</sup>), pp. 221–5; see *LIMC* 'Herakles' for a more or less comprehensive catalogue.

26 F. Brommer, *Herakles II: die unkanonischen Taten des Helden* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), pp. 99–116, catalogues encounters (the majority hostile) with no fewer than thirty-five deities.

27 A convenient overview of archaic Gigantomachies is provided by K. Schefold, *Gods and Heroes in Late Archaic Greek Art*, tr. A. H. Griffiths (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 55–67 figs. 59–73.

28 Stories about Herakles would seem to have a particular capacity for such interpretation, as I argue in 'Herakles and the art of allegory', in Rawlings, *Herakles-Hercules in the Ancient World*, pp. 71–96.

29 Lower frieze of Attic red-figure hydria by the Meidias Painter, c.420 BC, London E224: I discuss this in connection with Hygieia's Athenian cult in *Worshipping*

obvious an indicator of Herakles' overcoming of death is his descent to Hades to fetch Kerberos. As we have already noted, the Athenians claimed to have had a hand in this via the tradition that Herakles had first to be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries – a tradition which Boardman links with a change in the scene's iconography in Attic black-figure around 530 BC, from an image of forceful abduction to one of persuasion of the hound, with Persephone's blessing.<sup>30</sup> More direct again are the folktale motifs of Herakles' combats with the personifications of Old Age and Death. Thanatos appears on stage in the opening scene of Euripides' *Alkestis* (28–76), highlighting the centrality of death to the plot, and later Herakles gives a vivid description of how he intends wresting Alkestis from Death's grasp (843–9, cf. 1140–2). Herakles' encounter with Geras is known only from a handful of fifth-century vases, but could be reconstructed as consisting of an initially amicable conversation which disintegrates into a fight (Fig. 12. 4)<sup>31</sup> – and the idea of Old Age overcome inevitably calls to mind Herakles' ultimate happy fate, marrying Youth and living 'free from trouble and unaging' in the halls of Olympus (Hesiod, *Theogony* 950–5).

### APOTHEOSIS STORY

This brings me finally to the one element which marks Herakles out from all other pretenders to hero-god status: that is, the clear articulation of the change from one state to the other in the form of his apotheosis story. There really is nothing comparable for any of the other in-between characters we have mentioned: tradition accords the Dioskouroi immortality on alternate days, but this is never clearly spelt out, nor is any explanation offered for the arrangement;<sup>32</sup> Asklepios becomes a god in terms of cult, and he does acquire a selection of divine

*Virtues: Personification and the Divine in Ancient Greece* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2000), pp. 160–1 fig. 17.

30 J. Boardman, 'Herakles, Peisistratos and Eleusis', *JHS* 95 (1975), pp. 1–12. See also Schefold, *Gods and Heroes*, pp. 129–32 figs. 149–53.

31 See H. A. Shapiro, *Personifications in Greek Art: The Representation of Abstract Concepts 600–400 BC* (Zurich: Akanthus 1993), pp. 89–94 figs. 43–7.

32 See Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, pp. 323–8: both seem to be dead in the *Iliad* (3.243–4); *Odyssey* 11.301–4 has them alive and dead on alternate days and receiving 'honour equal to that of the gods'; Proklos' summary of the *Kypria* says that Zeus gave them immortality on alternate days; Pindar (*Nemean* 10.55–9, 85–8, and *Pythian* 11.61–4) specifies that they spend alternate days under the earth at Therapne and with Zeus on Olympus. No source makes it clear whether they alternate with each other or are both alive or dead at same time, until Lucian's *Dialogue of the Gods* 25 presents the classic problem of distinguishing identical twins who are only ever seen separately.



Figure 12.4 Herakles fights Old Age. Attic red-figure pelike, c.480 BC, name-vase of the Geras Painter (Paris, Louvre G234).

daughters including Hygieia,<sup>33</sup> but there is no accompanying *story* to make any sense of the change. Amphiaraos is supposed to have been swallowed up by the earth when fleeing from defeat at Thebes, and subsequently worshipped as a god at Oropos, but the story locates his immortality in the Underworld rather than on Olympos, so not differentiating him greatly from the ordinary dead hero.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Stafford, *Worshipping Virtues*, pp. 157–9.

<sup>34</sup> Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, pp. 518–19: the story of Amphiaraos' swallowing up is first attested in Pindar, *Nemeans* 8.38–55, 9.25–7 and 10.8–9; it may be alluded to slightly earlier in art (on a black-figure lekythos by the Beldam Painter, c.490–480





Figure 12.5 Marriage of Herakles and Hebe. Inscriptions identify (from left to right): the Muses, Kalliope, Apollo, Herakles and Hebe, Athene, Aphrodite, the Charites; Zeus, Hermes, Hera. Corinthian aryballos from Vulci, c. 600 BC.

For Herakles, on the other hand, not only is there his acceptance into the happy halls of Olympos, but his newfound immortality is underlined by his marriage to Hebe. The story is absent from the *Iliad*, and was probably added to the *Odyssey* and the *Theogony* some time after their original composition,<sup>35</sup> but we have firm evidence for its existence as early as around 600 BC in art (Fig. 12.5): this Corinthian aryballos conveniently has inscriptions naming all the main characters, including Herakles and Hebe in the chariot, being conducted into the presence of Zeus and Hera. More or less contemporary is an 'introduction to Olympos' scene from Samos, and not far behind one from Sparta, while from about 570 onwards we have upwards of 125 examples in Attic black-figure, and the high profile of the story in archaic Athens is further confirmed by its appearance on the pediment of a mid-sixth-century building on the Acropolis.<sup>36</sup> There is no doubting that the apotheosis continued

BC, Athens 1125), while a red-figure version of the Seven Against Thebes (volute krater c. 440 BC, Ferrara 3031) includes Amphiaraos' chariot sinking into the ground. The link with Amphiaraos' cult at Oropos is made by Pausanias 1.34.2, who comments that 'belief in Amphiaraos as a god was first established amongst the Oropians, but later all Greeks regarded him so'. See Pirenne-Delforge, this volume, Chapter 19, on other testimonia concerning Amphiaraos' divinity (*I. Oropos* 308; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.49).

35 *Iliad* 18.117–19 has Achilles referring to Herakles as dead, although this may be an example of Homer's manipulation of tradition rather than proving the absence of the apotheosis motif at this early date: P. Holt, 'The end of the *Trachiniai* and the fate of Herakles', *JHS* 109 (1989), pp. 69–80 at 72 and n. 15. *Odyssey* 11.601–4 has been suspected of being an interpolation since antiquity; on *Theogony* 950–5 see M. L. West, *Hesiod's Theogony* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 397–9 and 416–17.

36 Samian krater (unpublished): *LIMC* 'Herakles' no. 3330. Lakonian cup by the Boreads Painter, c. 570 BC: New York 50.11.7; *LIMC* 'Herakles' no. 2861. Pediment:



Figure 12.6 Herakles rises from the pyre, which nymphs attempt to douse while satyrs look on. Attic red-figure pelike by the Kadmos Painter, c. 410 BC (Munich 2360).

to be familiar in the fifth century, despite its apparent absence from Euripides' *Herakles* (noted above), and from Sophocles' *Trachiniae*.<sup>37</sup> Herakles himself refers explicitly to his 'immortal arete', won by his Labours, in his *deus ex machina* speech at the end

(footnote 36 continued)

Akropolis Museum 9. For an overview of 'Introduction' scenes, see Schefold, *Gods and Heroes*, pp. 33–46 figs. 31–47. On scenes representing the divine marriage, see A.-F. Laurens, 'Héraclès et Hébè dans la céramique grecque ou les noces entre terre et ciel', in C. Jourdain-Annequin and C. Bonnet (eds), *Ile Rencontre Héracléenne: Héraclès: les femmes et le féminin* (Brussels and Rome: Institut Belge de Rome, 1996), pp. 235–58. On Herakles feasting, see A. Verbanck-Piérard, 'Herakles at feast in Attic art: a mythical or cultic iconography?', in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Iconography of Greek Cult = Kernos*, Suppl. 1 (Athens and Liège: CIERGA, 1992), pp. 85–106.

<sup>37</sup> Whether or not the play alludes to the ultimate 'happy ending' is a matter of some debate: for a summary of earlier literature, and persuasive argument in favour of the apotheosis being assumed, see Holt, 'End of the *Trachiniae*'; cf. M. Finkelberg,



Figure 12.7 Marriage of Herakles and Hebe. Attic red-figure bell krater, c.410 BC (Villa Giulia 2382).

of Sophocles' *Philoktetes* (1418–20), while he is reported to have appeared alongside Hebe in answer to Iolaos' prayers in Euripides' *Herakleidae* (854–7), and the chorus later (910–14) reassure Alkmene that her son is 'established in heaven' rather than having gone to Hades. The transition from pyre to Olympos may well have been the subject of a satyr play, reflected in images such as Figure 12.6,<sup>38</sup> and the divine marriage seems to have been treated in old comedy, as well as featuring on several vases of the late fifth and early fourth centuries (Fig. 12.7).<sup>39</sup>

'The second stasimon of the *Trachiniae* and Heracles' festival on Mount Oeta', *Mnemosyne* IV 49 (1996), pp. 129–43.

38 Such a satyr play might conceivably have followed a trilogy in which Herakles' more mortal aspects were emphasized, as in the *Trachiniae*.

39 Comedy: e.g. Epicharmos' *Hebe's Wedding* and Archippos' *Herakles' Wedding*. For a detailed overview of Herakles in drama, see G. K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme* (Oxford: Blackwell 1972), pp. 40–80 (tragedy) and 81–100 (comedy). R. Vollkommer, *Herakles in the Art of Classical Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988), pp. 32–9 figs. 45–9, catalogues twenty-seven representations of Herakles' apotheosis and six of his wedding to Hebe from the period c.450–300 BC. Incidentally, the Athena in Fig. 12.7 is of the Parthenos type, as discussed by Lapatin, this volume, Chapter 7.

### CONCLUSION

So, what does all of this tell us about Herakles' position between gods and heroes? Ancient writers quite explicitly problematize Herakles' status from Herodotus onwards, offering explanations in the form of plural Herakleis or in terms of a change from one status to another. It is possible that traces of the same perception of ambiguity are reflected in cult practice in particular locations, although it is difficult to be sure, given our increasing awareness of how unclear the distinction between heroes and gods seems to have been in ritual. In both archaic art and classical tragedy Herakles' predominant image is certainly that of a hero, although we do see him in the company of gods as well. Ultimately, though, it seems to me that the decisive factor in articulating Herakles' exceptionally liminal status is the apotheosis story. Wide geographical dissemination of story from the sixth century onwards attests to the Panhellenic popularity of the idea of a people's champion promoted to Olympos. Paradoxically, while the story strongly asserts Herakles' divinity, at the same time its constant retelling keeps his mortal origins clearly in view, so that Herakles really is perpetually 'between gods and heroes'.

# IDENTITIES OF GODS AND HEROES: ATHENIAN GARDEN SANCTUARIES AND GENDERED RITES OF PASSAGE

*Claude Calame*

translated by Christopher Strachan

‘What is a Greek god?’ was the question addressed by Albert Henrichs in chapter 1 of this volume. The question *I* would like to ask here concerns a group of female divinities belonging to the classical Athenian pantheon all associated with sites characterized as garden sanctuaries. From the perspective of landscape architecture it is this: ‘What would the Greek gods amount to if they were not associated with heroes?’

## HEROIC AETIOLOGIES

A significant number of the Attic tragedies that have come down to us end with an aetiological section involving the establishment of a cult. This is particularly true of the tragedies of Euripides.<sup>1</sup> One of the best-known examples comes from Euripides’ *Hippolytos*. Among the consequences of Hippolytos’ tragic death is that his tomb at Troezen is to become the focus of a hero cult in which ritual acts will be performed. On the eve of their marriage, the girls of the city will cut off their hair and offer it to the young hero who denied the power of Aphrodite and refused to accept his own adulthood. This prenuptial ritual is attested also in other Greek cities: the memory of the young hero who has died in tragic circumstances is kept alive in performances consisting of musical offerings and the cult associates the hero with the goddess who encompassed his downfall – Aphrodite.<sup>2</sup> The

1 The complex problem of the narrative, cultural and emotional implications of the aetiological endings of Euripidean tragedies is addressed in particular by C. Segal, ‘Catharsis, audience, and closure in Greek Tragedy’, in M. S. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 149–72, and by C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), pp. 414–22.

2 Eur. *Hipp.* 1423–30; cf. Paus. 2.32.1–4. W. S. Barrett, *Euripides: Hippolytos* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 3–6, 160–2 and 412–13, supplies references to the several sources that attest the association of Hippolytos with Aphrodite not only at Troezen but also at Athens: there the goddess had a sanctuary ‘beside

effect of this is threefold. First of all, the foundation of a cult appears to provide the narrative sanction for the action that has taken place on the Attic stage; secondly, the heroic action can be seen to explain and at the same time give legitimacy to the ritual observances peculiar to the cult, relating the heroic story to the *hic et nunc* of the dramatic performance; and finally, the theatrical representation of the heroic aetiology may very well reshape the divine cult and revitalize its function by highlighting the heroic figure's association with it and adapting the cult to new political and cultural conditions.

This is also the case in another of Euripides' plays, the *Erechtheus*. At the end of it we learn that the daughters of the king of Athens, Erechtheus, who have been sacrificed in order to ensure their father's victory over his rival, Eumolpos, son of Poseidon, are to be commemorated each year by the sacrifice of oxen and by choral dances performed by girls. Their mother Praxithea, who has consented to the sacrifice of the eldest of her daughters, is to become the first priestess of Athena Polias, the tutelary goddess of the city. For his part, Erechtheus will be struck by the trident of Poseidon, buried by the god in the soil of Attica and finally honoured on the Acropolis itself, in the sanctuary that will become the Erechtheion; there he will be the heroic coadjutor of Poseidon himself, who shares with Athena the status of tutelary deity of Athens.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for Athena, Praxithea during her lifetime becomes the counterpart of her husband Erechtheus, who, as a hero alongside Poseidon, is henceforth also worshipped on the Acropolis. And the aetiological conclusion of *Iphigeneia in Tauris* will provide us with the opportunity to tackle a third example, which illustrates particularly well the elevation of the main protagonist of the play to the status of hero by her association with a divinity and the establishment of cult practices in her honour.

In the three tragedies mentioned the aetiological confirmation of the plot is put into the mouth of a god who appears as *deus* or *dea ex machina*. In each case, the protagonist becomes, as a hero, an assistant of the god that has been involved in his or her death, as cause of it or as saviour: Hippolytos for Aphrodite, Erechtheus for Poseidon, Iphigeneia for Artemis, as we shall see. Quite apart from the tragic

(footnote 2 *continued*)

Hippolytos', as Aphrodite herself also tells us in the tragedy's prologue (29–33); see also Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*, pp. 326–32.

- 3 Eur. F 370.64–100 Kannicht; on the different versions of the Erichthonios/Erechtheus foundation-myth, see R. Parker, 'Myths of early Athens', in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm and Routledge, 1987), pp. 187–214; for the cultic elements in this triple aetiology, see the commentary in C. Collard et al., *Euripides: Selected Fragmentary Plays* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1995), pp. 190–4.

treatments, aetiological accounts explaining and founding a rite by means of a tale about a hero generally take this form. We have only to think of the young Hyakinthos killed unintentionally by his lover Apollo when the two youths were practising throwing the discus, and honoured at Amyklai near Sparta, on the occasion of the great civic festival of the Hyakinthia.<sup>4</sup>

But are not the aetiological endings of the Attic tragedies the inventions of the χοροδιδάσκαλος? Are they not purely poetical creations? The question is assuredly controversial.<sup>5</sup> Be the matter of Euripidean inventiveness as it may, a hero cult dedicated to Hippolytos with a connection with Aphrodite, the goddess of erotic desire, whether productive or destructive, is attested at Troezen and also at Athens from the twenties of the fifth century, and it may have been projected onto the Troezen site where the perhaps deified Hippolytos presided over a vast sanctuary with which Aphrodite in particular was associated.<sup>6</sup> The cultic association, in the new Erechtheion, of Erechtheus, the legendary king of Athens, and Poseidon, the tutelary god of the city, dates from exactly the same period. What it is relevant above all to bring out here, in a collection of studies devoted to examining the differing identities that characterize the Greek gods and the transformations that they undergo in the polytheistic hierarchies prevailing in various cities, is that poetic creativity in weaving story and cult together in an aetiological account is often a means of associating a heroic figure and his or her story with a divinity.

From a poetic standpoint, the aetiological procedure has two consequences: at a narrative and dramatic level it helps to give the god's biography an element of which, by his very nature, he can have no

4 References are to be found in C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001<sup>2</sup>), pp. 174–82.

5 On this topic, see the contributions of Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*, pp. 414–22, and of R. Seaford, 'Aitiologies of cult in Euripides: a response to Scott Scullion', in J. R. C. Cousland and J. R. Hume (eds), *The Play of Texts and Fragments: Essays in Honour of Martin Cropp* (Leiden: Brill 2009), pp. 221–34, who respectively offer pertinent replies to the sceptical observations of M. Dunn, *Tragedy's End: Closure and Innovation in Euripidean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), e.g. pp. 57–63 (for the *Iphigeneia in Tauris*) and 87–100 (for the *Hippolytos*), and of S. Scullion, 'Tradition and invention in Euripidean aitiology', in M. Cropp et al. (eds), *Euripides and Tragic Theatre in the Late Fifth Century = Illinois Classical Studies* 24/25 (1999/2000), pp. 217–33; on the pragmatics of poetic aetiology, see now B. Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods: Performance of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 24–55.

6 The complex body of comment, based essentially on the very late evidence of Paus. 2.32.1–4, that has grown up on this subject is to be found in V. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque = Kernos*, Suppl. 4 (Athens and Liège: CIERGA, 1994), pp. 178–81.

experience – death; at the same time aetiology writes the heroic story into the community's past with an influence on the present. In the sphere of ritual and cult it contributes to the reshaping of the place, the function and the identity of a divinity in the context of the polytheistic configuration of a particular city, as well as to the meaning of the cult practices devoted to him. With the values attached to his story, the heroic figure in some sense takes on the function of a new epithet of the god, a kind of 'narrative epithet'. Thus it is not exclusively the god, with his profile, his life history and his functions who is concerned in such aetiological reinvention of the heroic tradition. Equally important are the design of the cultic space and landscape that are his, the ritual practices that take place there, and the qualities that the servants of the cult must possess. By their ritual offerings, which include musical performances, the worshippers, in a variety of practical ways, establish the identity of a particular god.

With the aid of three examples taken from a series of cults essentially restricted to women in the Athens of the fifth century, I should like to illustrate the network of strong semantic relationships uniting all these aspects: a god's identity, the aetiological myth, the god's association with a heroic figure, the way in which these are incorporated into a community's past, and how they affect the shaping of a cultic landscape, ritual observances and the status of worshippers. The cults concerned are pursued in sanctuaries distinguished by remarkable vegetation designed to accommodate ritual practices linked to the transition from one biological and social state to another – what in terms of modern anthropology is understood as a *rite of passage*.<sup>7</sup> In particular, the metaphors employed in the aetiological accounts that link a hero with the divinity being worshipped enable the constituents of a particular cult to share numerous characteristics – the god who superintends the passage, the status of the protagonists in the transition, and the vegetation that provides the architectural context for the practice of a cult readily understood in initiation terms.

7 With its tripartite schema, the rite-of-passage category including different types of initiation, as elaborated by Arnold van Gennep, has enjoyed a favour in modern readings of the nature of Greek cults which has in the end become fraught with misunderstandings, notably in the domain of mythology; on this point see the critical studies of F. Graf, 'Initiation: a concept with a troubled history', in D. Dodd and C. Faraone (eds), *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 3–24, and C. Calame, 'Indigenous and modern perspectives on tribal initiation rites: education according to Plato', in M. W. Padilla (ed.), *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece: Literature, Religion, Society* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1999), pp. 278–312; for a recent attempt to bring the problem into focus see W. Burkert, 'Initiation', in *ThesCRA* II, pp. 91–124.



### 1. Athena/Pandrosos – Aphrodite/Eros

In the account of his visit to the Acropolis, Pausanias mentions the olive tree in the enclosure laid out in front of the temple of Athena Polias, which we know as the Erechtheion; he reminds us that this was the olive tree that the goddess had caused to spring up on the barren rock of the Acropolis during her competition with Poseidon for the possession of Attica. Then Pausanias adverts to the little sanctuary dedicated to Pandrosos located in its immediate vicinity, and in fact enclosed within this sacred precinct. This girl was the only one of Kekrops' three daughters to escape guilt in the circumstances that will shortly be described. Departing from his usual practice, on this subject Pausanias offers us not a tale about a hero, but a sequence of ritual practices that has attracted numerous commentaries ever since. The ritual action is carried out by two of the four *arrhephoroi*, the young maidens who had been entrusted with the task of weaving the peplos to be presented to Athena Polias on the occasion of the Panathenaia. Shortly before the celebration of this great civic festival, the two girls would leave the Acropolis carrying the secret objects that the priestess of Athena had given into their care. Approaching the spot through an underground passage, they would lay these objects down in, or not far from, the sacred precinct of Aphrodite 'in the gardens', which backs onto the northern side of the rock of the Acropolis, to re-emerge carrying another object likewise carefully hidden from their view. After this twofold ritual journey the two participating *arrhephoroi* would quit their residence on the Acropolis, to be replaced by two other maidens.<sup>8</sup>

Historians of Greek religion have been quick to identify the 'myth' of the fate of the daughters of Kekrops as the aetiological account that Pausanias had omitted to provide, and to use it as the basis of their interpretation of the ritual journeys described in the *Periegesis*.<sup>9</sup>

8 Paus. 1.27.2–3. Dedicated to Aphrodite 'in the gardens', this precinct has been identified with the little sanctuary consecrated to Aphrodite and Eros, traces of which have been found on the northeast side of the Acropolis: cf., following others, Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 48–50; on the garden sanctuaries dedicated to Aphrodite, cf. A. Motte, *Prairies et jardins de la Grèce antique: de la religion à la philosophie* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1973), pp. 121–37.

9 See in particular W. Burkert, 'Kekropidensage und Arrhephoria', *Hermes* 94 (1966), pp. 1–25, repr. in his *Wilder Ursprung: Opferritual und Mythos bei den Griechen* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1990), pp. 40–59, and also C. Calame, *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece*, tr. J. Lloyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 170–4. For all the uncertainties that surround the identification of the location of the ritual and also its meaning, see now R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 218–23 and 227.

According to the great traditional myths that record the foundation of Athens and the autochthonous origin of its inhabitants, Athena, the tutelary goddess, had entrusted the guardianship of Erichthonios to the three daughters of Kekrops, the first king, born half-man half-serpent from the very soil of Attica. As Hermes recounts in aetiological fashion in the parodos of Euripides' *Ion*, the child was the product of the seed of Hephaistos gathered up by Earth when it fell to the ground in the smith-god's attempt to couple with the virgin Athena. This tale, which is attested in Attic iconography, as one would expect in several versions, recounts that after his autochthonous birth from the womb of his biological mother, Gê, his symbolic mother, Athena, handed the newborn child over to be looked after by the three daughters of Kekrops, Aglauros ('Splendour'), Herse ('Dew-Drop') and Pandrosos ('All-Dew'), at the same time forbidding them to open the basket in which he had been placed. The two elder daughters of Kekrops disobeyed Athena's instructions, whereupon the two serpents that had been set to guard little Erichthonios made their appearance, while Pandrosos, apparently, held aloof. In a fit of madness brought on by the will of Athena the two elder girls hurled themselves from the top of the Acropolis, while the third was henceforth worshipped there in the heroic sanctuary laid out in her honour beside what was to become the Erechtheion. Though Aglauros was the focus of a heroic cult in a sanctuary which probably occupied a platform at the foot of the eastern slope of the Acropolis, one hesitates to identify Hersê from then on with the divine Kourotrophos or nurse whose cult was celebrated in a hollow on the north slope, below the house in which the *arrhephoroi* resided. This building was quite certainly constructed on a site on the north edge of the Acropolis rock, apparently on the spot from which the two guilty Kekropids were supposed to have hurled themselves.<sup>10</sup>

Pandrosos, who had kept faith with Athena, is thus worshipped on the Acropolis in front of the Erechtheion and Athena's sacred olive tree, while her sisters Herse and Aglauros receive the honours due to heroes close to the sheer cliff from which they fell to their death on the

10 A mythographic and aetiological summary of the heroic tale is to be found in Eur. *Ion* 20–6 and 268–74; see also Pseudo-Apollodorus 3.14.6 and Paus. 1.18.2, for an aetiological overview analogous with that of Euripides, in which the author tells the story of the Kekropids when he draws attention to the sanctuary dedicated to Aglauros; for the iconographic record, see P. Brulé, *La fille d'Athènes* (Besançon and Paris: Université and Belles Lettres, 1987), pp. 68–79; see also Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, pp. 221–3 and p. 235 n. 81. For the difficulties involved in identifying the Herse of the literary texts with the Kourotrophos of the cult, see V. Pirenne-Delforge, 'Qui est la Kourotrophos athénienne?', in V. Dasen (ed.), *Naissance et petite enfance dans l'antiquité* (Fribourg and Göttingen: Academic Press, and Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004), pp. 172–85.

rocks, probably on either side of the sanctuary of Aphrodite in the gardens.

Female adolescence, objects with sexual associations, a fit of madness brought on by a god, death by suicide, the transition from a place in which a virgin goddess is worshipped to a sanctuary devoted to the goddess of adult sexuality, a journey through a wild and dark corridor – in short everything both in the heroic account, and then in the ritual that gains legitimacy from the account, seems to point the anthropologist in the field of Greek religion towards a rite of passage, and, more precisely, towards a tribal initiation rite.<sup>11</sup> Even so, from the point of view of the cult, neither the extreme youth of the *arrhephoroi*, pre-pubertal girls of good family chosen by the king-archon, nor the restriction of their number to two,<sup>12</sup> nor their return to the Acropolis after definitively quitting the high city allows us to ‘read’ the ritual action as an initiation practice reserved for adolescents. Besides, as far as the account that seems to provide an aetiological foundation for the ritual goes, the fact that their premature death fixes the status of the Kekropids at the point of adolescence also rules out an interpretation in terms of tribal initiation. On the other hand, the *kourotrophia* of the infant Erichthonios, who was destined to become, under the name of Erechtheus, one of the most illustrious of the legendary kings of Attica, and, in the rite, the part played by the *arrhephoroi* in the preliminary stages of the national festival held in honour of the goddess who was mistress of the city, commit us to a political reading. This is the kind of interpretation that is called for by the metaphorical role played by sexuality alike in the narrative and in the ritual aspects of the symbolic representation.

The interpretation offered by indigenous writers itself commits us to this. The ancient lexicographers did not fail to make an etymological connection between the name of the ritual (which is spelled in three different ways, ἄρρη-/ἔρρη-/ (h)ερρηφορία) and either the mystical nature of the objects carried by the girls, literally ‘not to be spoken of’, or the name of Kekrops’ daughter Herse, ‘Dew-Drop’.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, a late commentator has no hesitation in calling the Arrhephoria

11 The second of these two anthropological categories is a specification and a subclass of the first: cf. Calame, ‘Tribal initiation rites’, pp. 280–5.

12 Thus the Arrhephoria ritual does not present the element of *communitas* which is the particular feature present in every tribal initiation rite, according to the view put forward in the typological study by V. W. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 125–65. See also G. Donnay, ‘L’Arrhéphorie: initiation ou rite civique ?’, *Kernos* 10 (1997), pp. 177–205.

13 The references to these different explanations are given by Brulé, *La fille d’Athènes*, pp. 79–83 (also on the ages of the daughters), including in particular the evidence of the scholium on Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 641–45c (II. 4, pp. 33–4 Holwerda), which goes back to the Atthidographer Istros, *FGrH* 334 F 27.

'*Arrhetophoria*' in a comparison with the *Scirophoria* ritual and the festival of the *Thesmophoria*. He states that, in the celebration of this rite too, 'people bring back objects not to be spoken of made of fat and wheat flour in the form of snakes and male organs', while at the same time carrying pine cones 'because of their fertile character'. The obvious phallic connotations of the objects featured in the rite prompt the scholiast to refer it explicitly to fruit production and human procreation.<sup>14</sup>

Is, then, the *Arrhephoria* one of the 'fertility festivals' dear to the hearts of the religious historians of the nineteenth century? Even if the analogy (which works in both directions) between the productivity of the earth and human reproduction is written into the complex body of legends relating to the foundation of Attica that are called the 'autochthony myths', account must be taken of two native representations. On the one hand, there is the double nature of the father of the *Kekropids*, 'who unwinds his coils beside his daughters' (according to Euripides' *Ion*), resembling a snake that could be taken to have been born, like him, from the earth. But consideration must also be given, on the other hand, to the fertilizing efficacy attributed by the Greeks, in a variety of accounts, to water that falls from the sky and soaks into the soil: fecundating moisture that takes different forms including that of the seed of *Hephaistos*. Through the medium of the aetiological account, snake and rain/dew metaphorically associate the youthful *arrhephoroi* and their ritual acts with the procreation and birth of the future citizens of Athens; this on the model of the infant *Erichthonios*, who was born from the soil of Athens, ruled Attica as King *Erechtheus*, and was, after his defence of the city, struck and buried in that same soil by the will of the future tutelary god, *Poseidon*.<sup>15</sup> Their ritual journey, partly underground, has to do alike

14 Scholium on Lucian, *Dialogi Meretricii* (pp. 275–6 Rabe); labelling them as fertility rites, an oversimplification, L. Deubner compares the ritual acts performed in the Athenian *Arrhephoria*, *Scirophoria* and *Thesmophoria*, *Attische Feste* (Berlin: H. Keller, 1932), pp. 13–15, 40–4 and 50–9; for a more political approach, see also M. Detienne, 'Violentes "eugénies"', in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds), *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris, Gallimard: 1979), pp. 183–214. All the evidence would need to be re-examined on a basis of differential comparison.

15 For the serpent born of the earth, cf. Herodotus 1.78.3; for *Kekrops*, born of the soil of Attica to become its first king, half-human half-snake, cf. Eur. *Ion* 1163–4; the 'chthonian' values attributed to the snake are treated by L. Gourmelen, *Kékrops, le roi-serpent: imaginaire athénien, représentations de l'humain et de l'animalité en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 2004), pp. 38–48, 329–49 and 393–400. On the relationship between the *Arrhephoria* ritual and the stories of Athenian autochthony, cf. J. M. Redfield, *The Locrian Maidens* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 118–24.

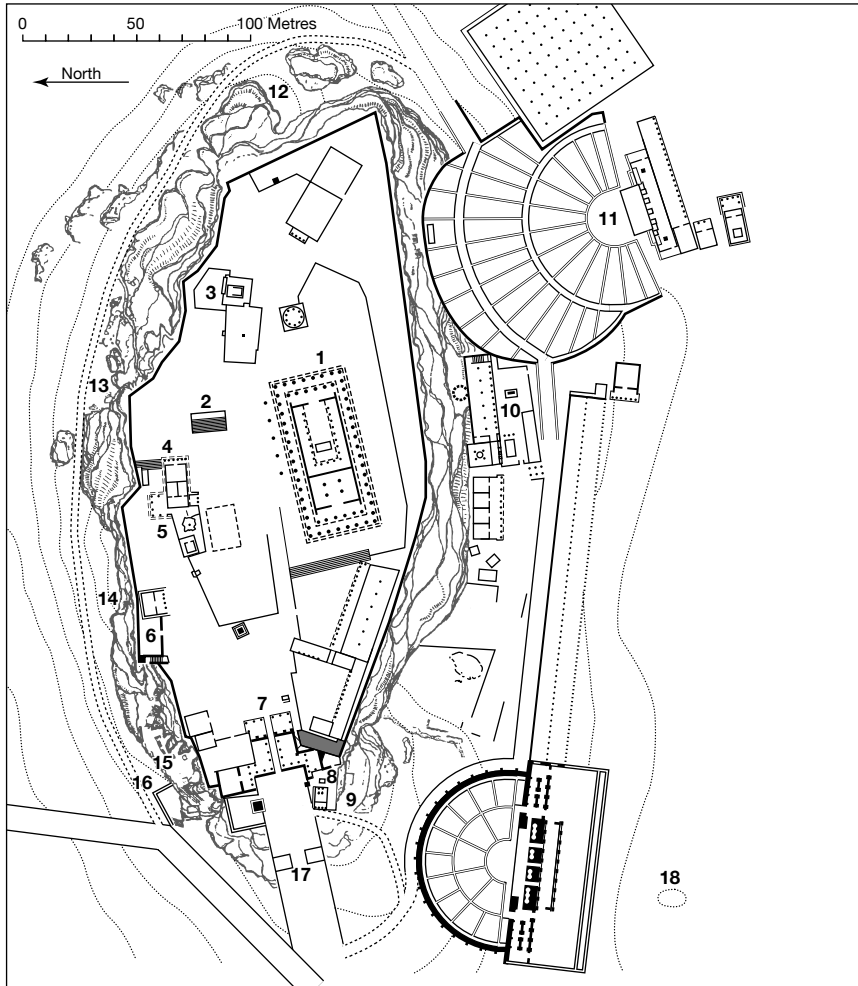
with sexuality and with its accomplishment in the autochthony to which every citizen of Athens laid claim.

From this point of view, the cultic aspect of the ritual journey undertaken by the two *arrhephoroi* is significant: they temporarily abandon the company of Athena on the Acropolis and join Aphrodite in her garden at the foot of the rock before going up once again to resume their place beside the city's tutelary goddess. Just as, in terms of cult and space, Athena is associated with Pandrosos, the maiden who modestly averted her gaze from the phallic snakes contained in Erichthonios' basket, so the inscriptions found in the sanctuary of Aphrodite 'in the gardens' make a point of coupling that goddess with her young coadjutor Eros, the embodiment of sexual desire; and this sanctuary seems to be situated between the two cult areas also at the foot of the Acropolis rock on the northeastern side, dedicated to the two sisters who came into contact with the emblems representing adult sexuality, Aglauros on one side, probably Herse on the other (cf. Fig. 13.1, nos. 12, 13, 14). Looked at from the point of view of landscape, the contrast lies between the civic values which, for the Athenians, were represented by the olive tree Athena had planted on the Acropolis (opposite the Pandroseion) and the values attributed to the various elements that made up a garden of Aphrodite, which had to do with erotic seduction and sexual fertility. To 'the olive tree with its shining foliage that feeds our children' sung of by the old men of Attica, who form the chorus in a play by Sophocles, may be compared, for example, 'the meadow sprinkled with spring flowers, where mares graze' described by Sappho in the poem in which she summons the goddess to appear.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Artemis/Iphigeneia

But we must now move away from the centre out to the periphery: to the sanctuary at Brauron sacred to Artemis and her heroic assistant, Iphigeneia. One aspect of this site taken as a whole to which

16 Soph. *OC* 694–706 may thus be set side by side with Sappho, fr. 2 Voigt. If the civic values crop up in the various anecdotes triggered by Athena's olive tree (cf. M. Detienne, *L'écriture d'Orphée* [Paris: Gallimard, 1989], pp. 71–84), the erotic values of the flower garden are embodied in numerous tales about the seduction of girls: cf. C. Calame, *L'Éros dans la Grèce antique* (Paris: Belin, 2002<sup>2</sup>), pp. 173–97, tr. J. Lloyd, *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 151–74 ; 'Aphrodite with her gardens' at Athens: cf. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 63–6 (excavations in the sanctuary and inscriptions: p. 50 n. 192); for the iconography, cf. C. Bérard, *Anodoi: Essai sur l'imagerie des passages chthoniens* (Neuchâtel: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1974), pp. 117–25.



*Figure 13.1* The Acropolis and its immediate surroundings in the second century AD.

1. Parthenon; 2. Altar of Athena; 3. Sanctuary of Zeus Polieus; 4. Erechtheion; 5. Pandroseion; 6. House of the Arrhephoroi; 7. Propylaea; 8. Temple of Athena Nike; 9. Temple of Aphrodite Pandemos?; 10. Asklepeion; 11. Theatre of Dionysos; 12. Sanctuary of Aglauros; 13. Sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros; 14. Grotto (sanctuary of Kourotrophos?); 15. Grotto of Pan; 16. Peripatos; 17. Beule Gate; 18. Sanctuary of the Nymph

archaeologists have paid scant attention is its remarkable landscape. However, even today, in an Attica laid waste by arterial roads, by collections of assorted supermarket buildings, by unsightly estates of separate dwellings, not to mention the criminal activity of arsonists,

the visitor is still struck by the richness of the sanctuary's woodland setting. Located on the outer limits of Attica, to the east of Athens beside the bay of Brauron, the sanctuary backs onto a wooded hillside. It is laid out round a spring whose flow is copious enough to have necessitated the construction of a bridge made from blocks of poros. This stream constitutes the western border of the stretch of ground dedicated to Artemis Brauronia, bounded on the north side by the river Erasinos, into which the water from the spring runs. The little temple of Artemis, which dates from the sixth century, is aligned east–west as we should expect and built practically on top of the spring, which is overshadowed by the temple forecourt. Immediately opposite the temple, one of the grottos in the hillside that marks off the sanctuary to the south has been identified as the supposed heroon of Iphigeneia. The esplanade in front of the temple and heroon may still have been marshy, and towards the end of the fifth century the Athenians arranged for the construction of a vast portico imparting a monumental aspect to the approaches to the sanctuary and spring (cf. Fig. 13.2).<sup>17</sup>

This U-shaped stoa, with its rows of banqueting chambers on two sides, was very probably a ἐστιατόριον, a reception hall intended for the servants and guests who visited the sanctuary. Moreover, an inscription dating from the end of the fourth century found in this very portico mentions a number of different buildings included within the precincts of the sanctuary. In addition to a gymnasium, a palaestra and stables, reference is made to a παρθενῶν that one might have expected to find in the portico itself among its meeting rooms. In fact, the sanctuary at Brauron is known to us particularly for the 'bear service' mentioned by the chorus of Athenian women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. Recalling their youth in a choral ode whose interpretation is disputed, these citizens' wives go through a list of the various rites they have taken part in, from the Arrhephoria at the age of seven until, with the flowering of their beauty at puberty, they attained the status of *kanephoroi*. This ritual stamp of nubility is preceded by the status

17 An account of the progress of the excavations together with the identification and dating of the structures so far uncovered is given by P. G. Themelis, 'Contribution to the topography of the sanctuary at Brauron', in B. Gentili and F. Perusino (eds), *Le orse di Brauron: Un rituale di iniziazione femminile nel santuario di Artemide* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2002), pp. 103–16; see also the minutely detailed critical analysis to which G. Ekroth, 'Inventing Iphigeneia? On Euripides and the cultic construction of Brauron', *Kernos* 16 (2003), pp. 59–118, submits the whole of the source material on the Brauron cult. According to Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Braurônia* (B 264 Theodoridis), the sanctuary is supposed to have been constructed by Peisistratos.

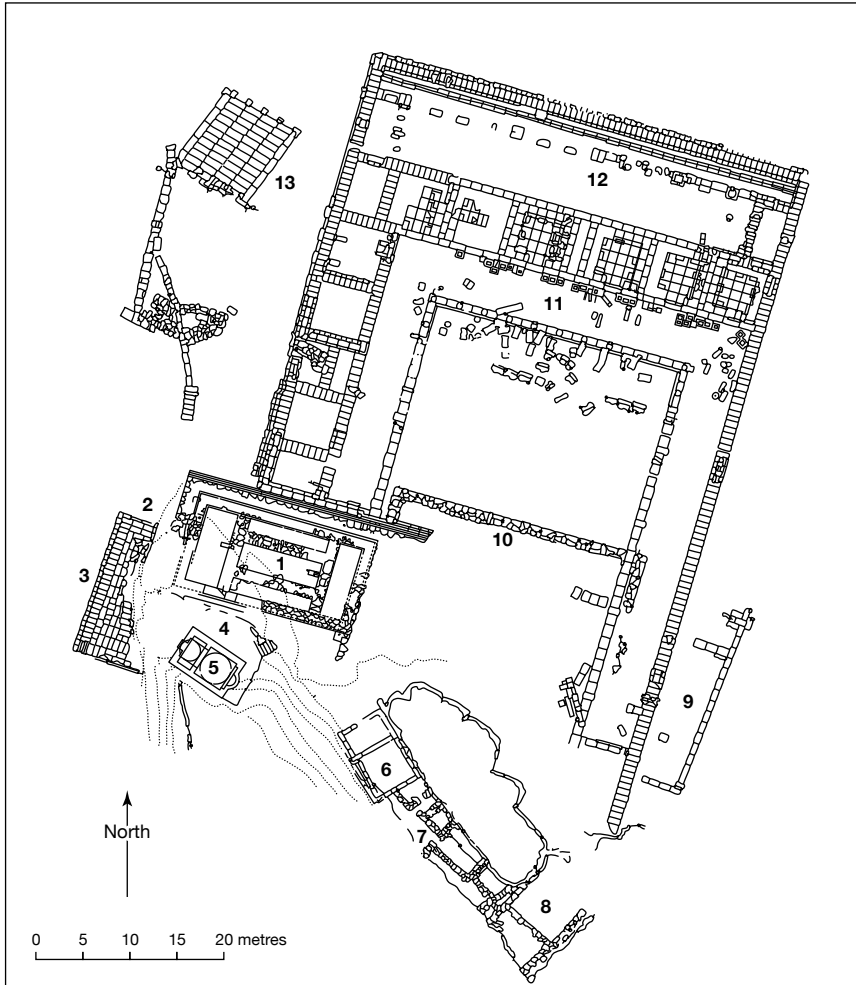


Figure 13.2 Plan of sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron.

1. Temple of Artemis; 2. Spring; 3. Western terrace; 4. Rock-cut terrace; 5. Chapel of Ag. Georgios; 6. 'Small Temple'; 7. Buildings within the cave area; 8. 'Sacred House'; 9. Eastern building; 10. Polygonal terrace; 11. Great stoa; 12. Northern section of the stoa; 13. Bridge.

of 'mill-girl', and then service as a 'bear' at the Brauronia, wearing a special yellow tunic, the κροκωτός.<sup>18</sup>

18 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 636–47; the interpretation of this passage is much disputed. For a balanced discussion, see F. Perusino, 'Le orse di Brauron nella *Lysistrata* di Aristofane', in Gentili and Perusino, *Le orse di Brauron*, pp. 167–74. The text of the inscription, along with a detailed commentary, is given by Themelis, 'Contribution to the topography of the sanctuary at Brauron', pp. 112–15.



Our first task should be to look at the legend of the founding of the ἄρκτεία ritual; for us it lies at the heart of the array of fragmentary and disputed evidence as it has come down to us in the mythographic accounts found in scholia and lexicographic notes. In an outer Attic deme, a wild bear was handed over to the sanctuary of Artemis, where it became a domestic pet; it nevertheless injured and blinded a girl who was playing with it, an act which her brother avenged by killing it. Artemis expressed her anger by demanding that, before her marriage, every girl should take part in a ritual in which she must 'imitate' the bear (ἄρκτεύθῃσθαι), wearing a sacred, saffron-coloured robe. Service as a bear at Brauron was imposed on the Athenians by the goddess in the guise of an expiatory rite following the epidemic that struck them because of the animal's murder.<sup>19</sup>

Again, with regard to the aetiological myth, we must also look at the version in which Iphigeneia's sacrifice by her father Agamemnon to enable the Greek fleet to sail for Troy is moved from Aulis to Brauron – and all the more so indeed because it is once again to Euripides himself that the change, at least for us, is due. In fact, in the aetiological ending he adds to his account of Iphigeneia's sojourn in the Taurid the tragedian makes a point of linking the young heroine's return to Attica with Brauron. Intervening once again as *dea ex machina*, Athena matches the return of Iphigeneia and Orestes from the land of the Taurians with their predilection for human sacrifice to the institution of three cults: Orestes is to found a sanctuary at Halai Araphenides, set among the border hills of Attica. There he will place the statue of Artemis that he has removed from the Taurid, and hymns will be sung in honour of the goddess as Artemis Tauropolos, and there he will institute the ritual in which drops of blood are made to flow from a man's throat in an expiatory gesture commemorating the sacrifice he had himself so narrowly escaped. Finally, at Brauron, in another district on the boundaries of Attica, Iphigeneia will become the priestess of the temple of Artemis before being honoured with a hero's tomb, where items of clothing left behind by women who had died in childbirth will be dedicated to her.<sup>20</sup> With regard to the cults

19 The various versions of the aetiological myth which have been the subject of numerous commentaries are cited and commented upon by M. Giuman, *La dea, la vergine, il sangue* (Milan: Longanesi, 1999), pp. 96–148. See also Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, pp. 238–42.

20 Eur. *IT* 1446–74, cf. also 958–82. How far the aetiological ending of the play should be viewed as fictional has long been the subject of controversy: for a balanced view, see in particular C. Wolff, 'Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*: aetiology, ritual and myth', *ClAnt* 11 (1992), pp. 308–34: it is the focus of the debate whose protagonists are mentioned above in n. 5; see especially Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*, pp. 31–40, 301–8 and 418–22; worth noting also,

for which there is evidence relating to the classical period both at Halai Araphenides and at Brauron, the aetiological treatment amounts to the 'Athenianization' of Panhellenic myths.<sup>21</sup> Even if the Athenian reformulation of the legend can be put down to Euripidean invention, even if it is true that the archaeological identification of a cavity on the Brauron site as the heroic sanctuary of Iphigeneia depends for the moment on the indications given in the *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, it still remains the case that the aetiological endings of the tragedies performed before the Athenian public may well have had a part to play in re-establishing the cults concerned as part of the Athenian way of life. Athena's intervention at the end of the *Iphigeneia in Tauris* provides Artemis Brauronia with her heroic assistant, while at the same time giving a fringe local cult a place in the great Panhellenic saga of the Trojan War.

From this point of view we should do well not to forget that though the epic tradition makes Iphigeneia the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, there is also a legend, doubtless of Athenian origin, that she is the daughter of Helen. According to this tale, Helen, kidnapped and made pregnant by Theseus, had consecrated a sanctuary at Argos to Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth, before entrusting the newborn baby to Clytemnestra, who went on to become the wife of Agamemnon while Helen herself married his brother Menelaos. Now scholars even in antiquity were already making the connection between childbirth and the morphology of the name *Iphigeneia*. 'She who was begotten by force' became in Attica from then on the hero-assistant of the goddess Artemis.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, and as a consequence, the modification of the story of Iphigeneia's sacrifice by her father Agamemnon is due to the Atthidographer, Phanodemus. In association with the cult complex at Brauron the Athenian version substitutes a bear for the doe Agamemnon sacrificed in his daughter's stead, while she in her turn was miraculously transported to the far-off Taurid.<sup>23</sup>

(footnote 20 *continued*)

however, is Ekroth's sceptical view, 'Inventing Iphigenia?', pp. 94–101, of the aetiology as a 'literary' invention ('Deconstructing Iphigenia!').

21 This is the term used by B. Kowalzig, 'The aetiology of empire? Hero-cult and Athenian tragedy', in J. Davidson et al. (eds), *Greek Drama. III: Essays in Honour of Kevin Lee* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2006), pp. 79–98.

22 This version of the heroic legend is mentioned by Paus. 2.22.6–7, and goes back at least to Stesichorus fr. 191 Page-Davies; cf. also Douris *FGrH* 76 F 92; for the etymology of *Iphigeneia*, cf. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women*, pp. 166–7 along with the bibliographic references given in n. 234.

23 Phanodemus *FGrH* 325 F 14. For the version that substitutes Brauron for Aulis as the place in which the sacrifice of Iphigeneia was carried out, see the evidence assembled in C. Montepaone's study 'Ifigenia a Brauron', in Gentili and Perusino, *Le orse di Brauron*, pp. 65–77; see also H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Artemis

So much, then, for the goddess who, from that time on, reigned with her assistant over the green sanctuary of Brauron. The ritual and its participants for their part are to be found illustrated in the fragments of a κραιπίσκοις dating from the second half of the fifth century. In a circular fresco, what seem to be two stages of a ritual, identifiable as the Arkteia by the presence of a bear, are represented. In the first scene young girls are welcomed into a tree-filled sanctuary. The second depicts a ritual race taking place near palm trees in which the participants are naked adolescent females and young girls wearing short tunics, very likely the κροκωτός mentioned in the sources (Fig. 13.3). The saffron colour of this tunic so often referred to in comedy evokes the virtues the Greeks attributed to the crocus. This sweet-smelling flower, along with the lotus and the hyacinth, adorned the grassy meadow that witnessed the paradigmatic union of Zeus and Hera in the *Iliad*. It was also present among the similarly paradigmatic flowers that sprinkled the seductive grassland from which Persephone was stolen away in the scene already mentioned from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. To the erotic power the poets attribute to the crocus flower because of its bewitching perfume must be added the efficacy in the treatment of female ailments with which the plant is credited in the Hippocratic treatises. In fact, saffron is an ingredient in a number of decoctions and applications supposed to promote conception and procreation.<sup>24</sup>

The palm tree, on the other hand, to judge from the role that it plays in the myth of the birth of Apollo from Leto's womb on the island of Delos, seems to be symbolically connected with childbirth. This tree forms part of the iconography in numerous depictions of the abduction of girls or young women and is even to be found in representations of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. It was also a feature of the cult site associated with the sacrifice at Aulis itself: Pausanias tells us that there was a sanctuary on that spot distinguished by a plane tree and a group of palms. The symbolic significance of the palm tree had no doubt less to do with the loss of virginity or the notion of fertility in its widest

and Iphigeneia', *JHS* 103 (1983), pp. 87–102 = H. Lloyd-Jones, *Greek Comedy, Hellenistic Literature, Greek Religion, and Miscellanea* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 306–30, and J. Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), pp. 101–9. We should also remember Pausanias' mention of the cult of Artemis Iphigeneia at the little city of Hermione in the Argolid (2.35.2).

- 24 Cf. *Il.* 14.346–9; *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 2–11 and 425–32, with Calame's commentary, *L'Éros dans la Grèce antique*, pp. 173–85 (*The Poetics of Eros*, pp. 153–64); for the use of the crocus in the gynaecological treatises attributed to Hippocrates, see M. Giuman, “Risplenda come un croco perduto in mezzo a un polveroso prato”: croco e simbologia liminare nel rituale dell'*arkteia* di Brauron', in Gentili and Perusino, *Le orse di Brauron*, pp. 79–102.

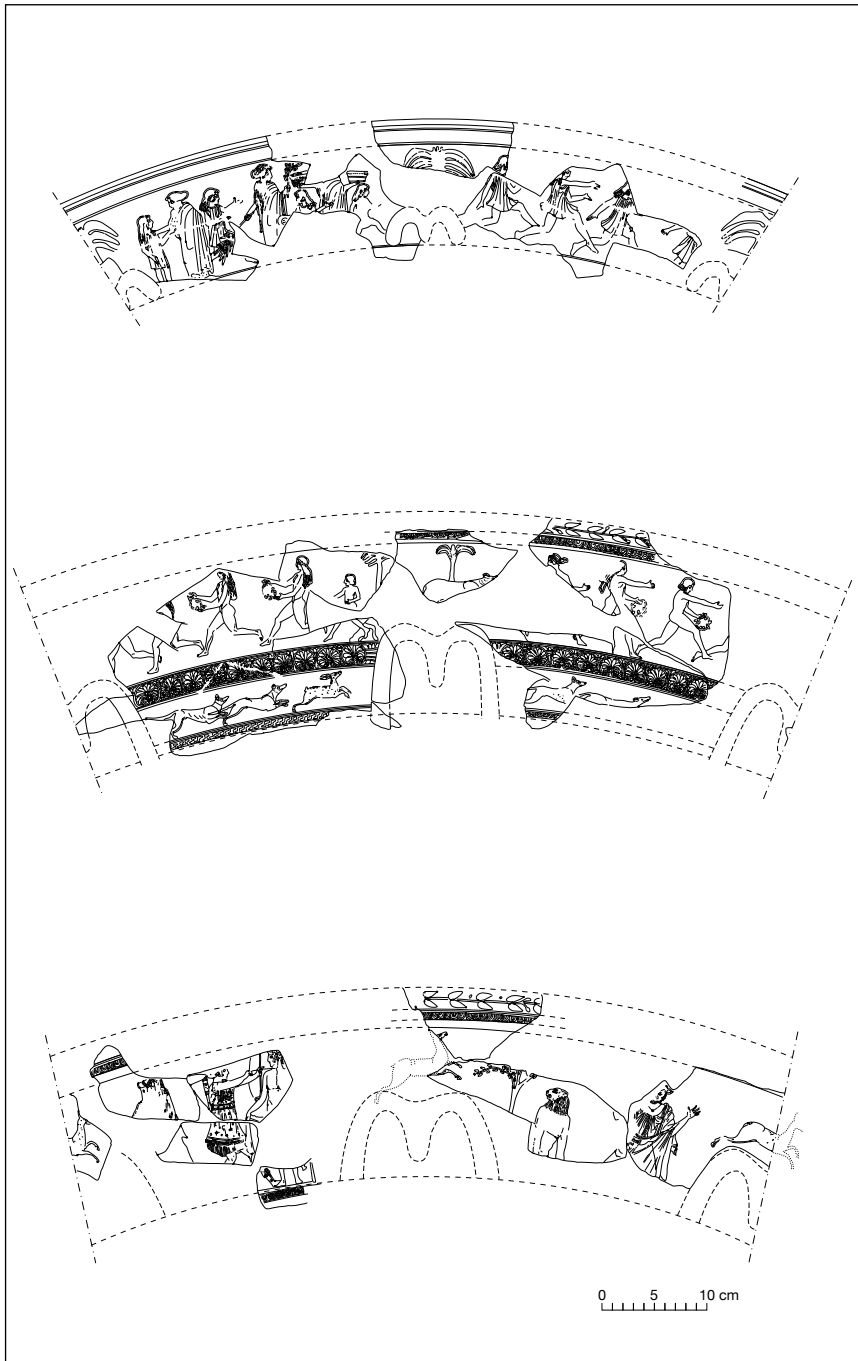


Figure 13.3 Reconstruction of circular fresco on fragments of Attic red-figure *krateriskos*.

sense than with the capacity for procreation that meant that girls were now of marriageable age.<sup>25</sup>

There can be little doubt that, looked at from an anthropological viewpoint, a number of the narrative constituents of the aetiological account and certain of the spatial aspects built into the Brauron ritual distinguish the Arkteia as a rite of passage designed to mark an Athenian girl's transition from the state of adolescence to that of an adult woman ready for marriage. As far as the narrative element goes, we must take account of two distinct aspects: first, the passage of the bear, the animal closest to human beings in Greek representation, from an untamed state to one of domestication – the Greek metaphor for the sexual subjection of a wife – and, secondly, the symbolic death represented by the girl's 'passing on'. In terms of the ritual, presided over by Artemis as mistress of woods and marshland, we have the architectural setting with the water flowing from a spring as well as the race reserved, as at Sparta, for girls depicted as naked. Besides, its geographical location defines Brauron as a border sanctuary as much because of its situation on a marshy plain as by its position on the limits of Attica.<sup>26</sup>

Everything would be for the best in the best of all possible tribal initiations, were it not for the fact that the iconographic evidence testifies to the ritual presence at Brauron of girls quite certainly nowhere near the age of puberty. Included among these are the ones shown on the κραιπίσκοι apparently wearing the κροκωτός, or those who form part of family groups portrayed on various votive reliefs paying homage to the huntress goddess. Without spending time over a thorny question of iconographic semiotics, we should remember that each of the three stages in the rite of passage can itself constitute a rite of transition. To this extent it is probable that service as a 'bear', spanning as it did the entire period in which girls were growing up, included rites of entry and rites of departure to which girls of different ages were invited.<sup>27</sup>

25 Paus. 9.19.6–7; for the identification in the iconography of the 'altar + palm tree' motif, which has been shown in several studies by C. Sourvinou-Inwood to relate to the maturity of girls of marriageable age, see M. Torelli's analysis 'Divagazioni sul tema della palma: la palma di Apollo e la palma di Artemide', in Gentili and Perusino, *Le orse di Brauron*, pp. 139–51.

26 On the subject of the initiating function of the girls' race at Sparta in particular, cf. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women*, pp. 113–16 and 191–6; on Artemis' connection with marshy regions, see S. G. Cole, *Landscapes, Gender and Ritual Space* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 191–201. The interpretation of the Brauron cult complex as the home of an initiation ritual is re-examined by Giuman in *La dea, la vergine, il sangue*, pp. 105–31, where he details the theses put forward by a number of his predecessors.

27 Redfield, *Locrian Maidens*, pp. 98–110, formulates the hypothesis that the Arkteia represented a rite of separation marking a girl's graduation to the liminal

On the other hand, Artemis Brauronia also had a sanctuary on the Acropolis itself, at the religious centre of Athens, thus establishing a polar relationship between the locations of her cult that marked the limits of the city's territory. In this vast classical portico there was apparently no element of greenery, but a series of offerings relating to the menstrual cycle. There were articles of clothing put there by girls who were affected by the various troubles that the Greeks blamed on the start of a woman's periods, and there were the offerings made by adult women to Artemis as the regulator of the various phases in a woman's fertility: menarche, menstrual cycle, impregnation, confinement with its attendant risk of death in childbirth.<sup>28</sup> As far as adolescents are concerned, the individual character of the offerings seems to suggest less a collective tribal initiation rite than a private ritual linked to a girl's first periods. Anthropologists place an individual ritual of this kind in the category of rites of puberty.

Be that as it may, the complex series of rituals performed in honour of Artemis and her assistant Iphigeneia between the city's religious centre and one of its border sanctuaries focuses on the different moments of a girl's passage from one condition to another, sexual maturity, conception, gestation and confinement, while anything to do with love and sexual passion is left to Aphrodite and her assistant, Eros. All this takes place within a family framework in which *kourotrophia* is exercised from birth until the age of reproduction, and in a ritual context in which service as a bear could last from one end of a long period of adolescence to the other. There, in a landscape set not with flowers but with trees, running water gushing forth plays the same central part as is taken by moisture and fluxes in the Hippocratic conception of female physiology. As the Hippocratic treatise *On the Regimen* puts it, 'women, taking their origin more from water, develop through food, drink and diet that are cold, moist and soft'. It is, then, in no way surprising that Athena, in founding the various cults that mark Iphigeneia's return to Attica from the Taurid, should, in the Euripidean tragedy that bears her name, promise the heroine who

(footnote 27 *continued*)

status of *parthenos*; see N. Marinatos, 'The Arkteia and the gradual transformation of the maiden into a woman', in Gentili and Perusino, *Le orse di Brauron*, pp. 29–42, and also Parker's sensible observations in *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, pp. 232–37 (along with the iconography).

- 28 See my review of the documentary evidence and the accompanying thoughts upon it presented in 'Offrandes à Artémis Braurônia sur l'Acropole: rites de puberté?', in Gentili and Perusino, *Le orse di Brauron*, pp. 43–64; see also Marinatos, 'The Arkteia', pp. 30–2; she sees the Arrhephoria as a ritual for pre-adolescents (between the ages of 7 and 12), the Arkteia as one for adolescents (from 12 to 14 years old).

was to remain for ever a girl a sacred office and a heroic burial place beside 'the holy terraces of Brauron', in the landscape characterized by moisture and greenery that we have described.<sup>29</sup> The aetiology and the landscape of the cult site combine to promote a fresh and vigorous interaction between the goddess and her functions, the life story of her assistant featuring her sacrifice and later her death, and the characteristics defining her devotees and the ritual acts they perform. All these interrelated elements are part of a process of 'anthropopoiesis' (or rather 'gynaecopoiesis') which is based on a gender-related conception of what human beings are.<sup>30</sup> And in its ability to focus the biographical details of a Panhellenic heroic figure on a local site, tragedy in particular is able to establish a relationship between these and the ritual acts performed there, and thus to help to establish the practice of 'forging' a man or a woman as part of the past history of a unique civic community: Athens.

### 3. Demeter/Persephone

It is impossible to form a view of the religious practices that contribute to the process of forging an adult Athenian woman in the different stages in her biological, civic and religious development without taking a look at Demeter and her daughter Persephone. Of the Eleusinian Mysteries – a transition festival centred on initiation if ever there was one – we shall restrict ourselves to mentioning only the few features that relate to their cult landscape, while discussion of the Thesmophoria and the Scirophoria will be reserved for a complementary study.

The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* is a long poem with an aetiological purpose. The abduction of Persephone takes place in a landscape consisting of a meadow carpeted with flowers whose bewitching scent excites the power of Eros. Demeter, in search of her daughter, stops at Eleusis beside the 'maidens' well', which is shaded by a bushy olive. Disguised as an old woman beyond the age of childbearing, she is welcomed by the four daughters of King Keleos, whose names and qualifications betoken beauty and sexual attraction: 'Four were

29 Hipp. *On the Regimen* 1.27.1–2; Eur. *IT* 1462–3 (cf. above, n. 20); cf. A. E. Hanson, 'Conception, gestation and the origin of female nature in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*', *Helios* 19 (1992), pp. 31–71, and also Cole, *Landscapes, Gender and Ritual Space*, pp. 158–71 and 209–18.

30 The different symbolic practices that contribute to the formative process by which a human being turns into a cultural and social entity are approached in the collective research published by F. Affergan et al., *Les représentations de l'anthropologie* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2003).

they and like goddesses in the flower of their girlhood, Kallidike, and Kleisidike and lovely Demo and Kallithoe'; the bard makes a point of comparing them to hinds or young heifers bounding about in a meadow at the coming of spring. Moreover, it is on a spot above what has been later identified as the well of the 'fair dancing ground' that Demeter, finally revealing herself as a goddess, commands the people of Eleusis to build her the great temple and altar beneath the acropolis, the temple that will be the home of the Mysteries (ὄργια) in which she herself will instruct them. Eight centuries later Pausanias happily lingered by the 'Kallichoron well' (Καλλιχόρον φρέατος); he tells us that it was here that the women of Eleusis first performed choral dances and sang songs in honour of the goddess.<sup>31</sup> Archaeologists have no difficulty in identifying this spot as located in the immediate neighbourhood of the Great Propylaea at the entrance to the classical sanctuary. The sanctuary itself is arranged round the Anaktoron, the large, square *telestêrion* rebuilt by Perikles to house the initiation rites. Archaeologists like to imagine the ritual tension that must have been set up between the joyful choral celebrations round the well on the esplanade leading to the sanctuary and the ritual lamentations from inside the sacred precinct; they may have accompanied the passage of the initiates into the cavern where archaeologists think they have identified the 'Sad Rock' on which Demeter sat down to weep for her missing daughter. Be that as it may, it is probable that, echoing the flowery meadow where Persephone danced with her companions, the daughters of Ocean, the maidens' well to which the daughters of Keleos came to draw water is none other than the 'fair dancing ground' belonging to the Peisistratean period that marks the entrance to the sanctuary Demeter herself ordered to be built. The aetiological thrust of the *Homeric Hymn* as much as the etymological significance of the place-names points to an identification of this kind, with the difference, nevertheless, that in the poem the actions involved in the account are carried out by girls, whereas the ritual acts referred to, for example, by Pausanias are performed by women.<sup>32</sup>

31 *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 98–111, 174–8, 192–205 and 268–74 (cf. also 470–9), on each of which passages see N. J. Richardson's indispensable commentary, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), particularly pp. 181–2, 250–1 and 326–8 on the problem of the identification between Parthenion (l. 99) and Kallichoron (l. 272); see also Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 13, 7.

32 Paus. 1.38.6; the archaeological basis for the identification of the various sites is given by Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, pp. 326–8; see also the theories put forward by K. Clinton, *Myth and Cult* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1992), pp. 12–28 and 35–7. History of the (Peisistratean) sanctuary: G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 55–105.



In this landscape in which myth has given place to cult, where flower-carpeted meadow, cool water and grotto symbolize the condition of graceful maidens who are now sexually attractive and ready for marriage, we should not forget the relevance of the famous plain of Raros (Ῥάριον πεδίον); Pausanias goes on to mention it immediately after the Kallichoron well. Following the usual aetiological pattern, this is to be identified with the place where, in the *Homeric hymn*, Demeter and her mother, Rhea, meet. Rhea has been charged by Zeus with the task of persuading her daughter to cease from her mourning and lay aside her anger against Zeus now that her own daughter has been restored to her. The plain bearing the name of the father (or grandfather) of Triptolemus, though duly ploughed, had become infertile and barren of all vegetation by the will of the goddess; but after the reconciliation she lost no time in sending up from its rich furrows the long ears that would soon provide a harvest of barley. And as the plain became once again 'the bringer of life' with its return to productivity, so the whole wide earth was covered with leaves and flowers.<sup>33</sup>

The emphasis placed in the Homeric account on the vain efforts made by the Eleusinians to till and sow their land and the eventual sprouting of barley from the furrows they had ploughed may perhaps be associated aetiologically with the autumn festival of the Proerosia, which marked the beginning of the annual cycle of work in the fields with a ritual act of ploughing, and was celebrated in several Attic demes. For two of these demes, moreover, Paeania and Thorikos, calendar references survive to a succession of rituals, the Proerosia (pre-ploughing), the Chloïa (green shoots rite) and the Antheia (festival of flowering), accompanying a cycle of seasons whose rhythm is progressively marked by the various effects of agricultural labour. The cycle of the farming year provides a rich vein of interactive metaphor that can be applied in a human context to the procreation and growth of mortal men and women. The Proerosia celebrated at Eleusis is doubtless to be related to the threefold 'sacred ploughing' that Plutarch compares in his *Conjugal Precepts* to the matrimonial ploughing and sowing aimed, under the aegis of Aphrodite, at the procreation and birth of legitimate heirs! Ritual ploughing was carried out by turns on the plain of Raros, at Sciron not far from Athena's sanctuary on the Sacred Way half-way between Eleusis and Athens, and probably at the foot of the Acropolis in a place called after the Attic hero Bouzuges,

33 *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 305–9, 449–57 and 471–3; Demeter's sanctuaries are generally situated outside towns: cf. S. G. Cole, 'Demeter in ancient Greek city and its countryside', in S. E. Alcock and R. Osborne (eds), *Placing the Gods* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 199–216.

the first man to have ‘yoked an ox’ for the purpose of ploughing a field, perhaps situated near the Eleusinion.<sup>34</sup> What is more, Pausanias, in the context of his visit to the Kallichoron well, recalls the custom of using barley from the plain of Raros – represented by a field specifically dedicated to Triptolemos and an altar – to make the sacrificial cakes offered up at Eleusis, and several pieces of evidence testify that the prizes awarded at the Eleusinian Games consisted of grain that came from these same ploughed fields of Raros.<sup>35</sup>

The long Homeric poem, as we have seen, in uniting as it does the various narrative accounts relating to the foundation of the Eleusinian Mysteries, draws attention to the physical and vegetal features that mark out the landscape framing their celebration. Mention should, however, also be made in this connection of the waters of the Kephisos, said by the chorus of the *Oedipus at Colonus*, a play we have had occasion to refer to already, to bring fertility to the Attic lands. The great procession of men and women about to be initiated into the cult of Demeter that had started from the centre of Athens crossed this stream as part of the ritual before stopping, as seems likely, at the Erineon, a wood of fig trees that was supposed to protect the entrance to the Underworld allegedly used by Hades in encompassing his abduction of Persephone.<sup>36</sup> The return to Persephone, also known as Kore, a title denoting her girlhood, provides an opportunity to consider also the choral group of Eleusinian *mystai* that Aristophanes brings onto the stage in the *Frogs*. The comic parody relocates the whole event in Hades, the choral procession wending its way to Eleusis for the solemn initiation ritual, with the words pronounced, the deeds accomplished and the objects revealed by the will of the goddess in founding the rite. Instead of the Eleusinian mixed landscape with its virginal waters and fields under cultivation, the goal made for by this procession, which includes, among others, girls and adult women, is a marshy, flowered meadow illuminated by torches. In a series of deictic self-references, as impressive as it is complex, the chorus of initiates (οἱ μὲν μνημένοι) celebrates in turn Iakchos, in the most exuberant dances, then Demeter and doubtless also her daughter Persephone, whose sanctuary is represented at the end

34 Plutarch, *Precepts of Marriage* 144ab, see also the *Parian Marble*, FGrH 239 A 13, which inserts Triptolemos’ ploughing and harvest on the plain of Raros into the chronology of the history of Athens, and also Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 28–36. On the threefold ritual ploughing, cf. Cole, *Landscapes, Gender and Ritual Space*, pp. 85–8, and, finally, on the festival of the Proerosia, the material assembled and annotated by Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, pp. 195–8 and 330–2 (for Eleusis).

35 Paus. 1.38.6; other references are given in Richardson’s fine commentary, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, pp. 297–8.

36 Paus. 1.38.5; cf. Soph. *OC* 685–91 (cf. above, n. 16), part of a choral ode in which the two goddesses figure in a context that includes narcissus and crocus flowers!

of the ode as a flowery wood, throughout which are scattered meadows filled with roses. The description of the idealized cultic space in which the initiates are to execute 'the fairest of dances' (καλλιχορόωτατον) not only makes implicit reference by a play on words to the Kallichoron well at Eleusis: but, in the erotic overtones that result from its comic relocation, it also harks back to Persephone's meadow, access to which in the heart of the land of Hades is reserved for those and only those men and women who have been initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries; so they have been offered the better life in the Hereafter already poetically promised to them at the end of the long aetiological account in the *Homeric Hymn*.<sup>37</sup>

In the complex network of semantic relationships that exist between landscaped sites with their various types of vegetation, aetiological accounts that both establish cultic practices and at the same time endow them with historical authenticity, and ritual acts whose agents, distinguished by a variety of characteristics, all have their own particular status, Persephone appears, from the narrative point of view, as something very like a heroic *parhedros* of Demeter. Like Pandrosos, Aglauros or Iphigeneia, she is brought to face a (symbolic) death that determines her future divine status, in this particular case not as παρθένος, 'virgin', but as νύμφη, a young bride who has not yet borne her first child. Without undergoing an actual process of heroization, Persephone enjoys her own peculiar form of immortality, shared between Hades and Olympos.

## IN CONCLUSION: CORRESPONDENCES AND CONTRASTS

The metaphorical echoes that reverberate over landscaped cultic space are, then, of the essence. They arise from the symbolic significance attributed to the physical and vegetal elements of which it consists, the ritual acts that are performed there, the status of the participants, the functions and fields of influence that belong to the gods and heroes or goddesses and heroines who preside over the cult practices; they are the characters in the founding aetiological myths that chronicle the pivotal moment in time and space that marks a 'first time'. Looked at in this

37 Cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 316–52, 372–84 and 440–59, then *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 480–9. The ambiguous status of the chorus of *mystai* is clarified by K. Dover, *Aristophanes: Frogs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 57–69 (with n. 13 on the identification of the sanctuary alluded to in these textually uncertain lines.); on the landscape described, see Motte, *Prairies et jardins de la Grèce antique*, pp. 114–21 and 263–79. For the meaning of the double makarismos which concludes the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, see C. Calame, 'L'Hymne homérique à Déméter comme offrande: regard rétrospectif sur quelques catégories de l'anthropologie de la religion grecque', *Kernos* 10 (1997), pp. 111–33, now in *Sentiers transversaux. Entre poétiques grecques et poétiques contemporaines* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2008), pp. 63–83.

way, the several garden sanctuaries reviewed here can be seen to mark out the cultic space of Athens and at the same time to play their part in the series of biological transitions that affected the wife of an Athenian citizen in her progress through life: birth, upbringing, puberty, readiness for marriage, sexual union, first pregnancy, first confinement, death. The various stages in this 'anthropopoietic' developmental process begin with choral training and continue through the burgeoning of beauty to the consummation of erotic desire in marriage and procreation. At each point, by means of a series of cultic observances embraced, no doubt, by the vast category of 'rites of passage', worshippers solicit the favour of female divinities such as Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite and Demeter, along with their often heroic *parhedroi*. In a series of analogical relationships taking in, on one hand, the fertilizing effect of limpid water, the growth of plant life and human adolescence, and, on the other hand, the effect of work on the land, the production of basic foodstuffs and the procreation promoted by the sex-drive right through to the eschatology that promises a life continuing in the Hereafter, an Athenian woman is accompanied by an array of protective divinities on her journey through life; by means of choral training and ritual acts, this female existence is lived out in Attic space that has been transformed by symbolic and anthropopoietic human activity into (cultic) landscape.

Thus, in a polytheistic system such as this, there is a strong interaction between the way divinities are defined (in terms of their characteristic features and functions) and the characteristics and status of the mortals who honour and depend on them. In classical Greece in particular, aetiological accounts, whether embodied in choral hymns or sung by a tragic chorus, make a practical contribution to completing the biography of each of the divinities concerned and in shaping their identities to suit the parameters of an individual cult. In its capacity to assimilate a heroic figure into the biography of a god as well as into the cult practices addressed to him, the aetiological procedure not only gives added significance to the succession of rituals in the calendar of a local cult, but also enhances the symbolic values relating to the history of an individual sanctuary and the space it occupies. A practical effect of these aetiological myths is to increase the permeability of the boundaries separating not only gods and heroes, but also gods and human beings, and that in a way that ignores any (modern) contrast between 'Olympian' and 'chthonian'.<sup>38</sup>

38 On the blurring and finally the irrelevance of this distinction, see, most recently, the various contributions published by R. Hägg and B. Alroth (eds), *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian* (Stockholm: Paul Åström, 2005); Stafford, this volume, Chapter 12.

In their aetiological conjunction with heroic figures, the general profile and functions of the Greek gods undergo a political transformation that is reflected in alterations to the space belonging to their cults. Their position in a pantheon unlike any other depends on the historical perspective of the civic community that honours them. Here the poets have a crucial role. By means of the heroic aetiology presented in their works, they not only recreate and transform the gods and their assistants, but through musical and ritual performance they add renewed significance to the ritual acts performed by their worshippers. The pragmatics of poetic and ritual aetiology has the power of transforming the cults it is related to.



**PART III**

**DIACHRONIC ASPECTS**





## EARLY GREEK THEOLOGY: GOD AS NATURE AND NATURAL GODS

*Simon Trépanier*

Les autres religions, comme les païennes, sont plus populaires, car elles sont en extérieur; mais elles ne sont pas pour les gens habiles. Une religion purement intellectuelle serait plus proportionnée aux habiles; mais elle ne servirait pas au peuple.

Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* no. 252

Philosophers stretch the meaning of words until they retain scarcely anything of their original sense; by calling ‘God’ some vague abstraction which they have created for themselves, they pose as deists, as believers, before the world; they may even pride themselves on having attained a purer and higher idea of God, although their god is nothing but an insubstantial shadow and no longer the mighty personality of religious doctrine.

Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*

The present chapter does not survey the whole of Greek theology, or even all of early Greek theology.<sup>1</sup> Rather, in keeping with this book’s

<sup>1</sup> By ‘early Greek’ I mean the first philosophers down to Democritus, but excluding the Sophists and Socrates. The term ‘Presocratic’ does not have exactly the same range, but is so entrenched that it can’t be completely avoided, so I will use it here as roughly equivalent to early Greek. All references will use the Diels-Kranz reference system, after H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edition by W. Kranz (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951). B followed by a number indicates a fragment thought to be genuine, whereas A indicates a reported view, which may contain some distortions or anachronisms. The Greek text is provided where I think that helpful, or because its meaning is debated, but otherwise passages will be given in translation. For studies on religion and the gods in the first philosophers, see, in reverse chronological order: T. M. Robinson, ‘Presocratic theology’, in P. Curd and D. W. Graham (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 485–500; G. Betegh, ‘Greek philosophy and religion’, in M. L. Gill and P. Pellegrin (eds), *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 625–40; S. Broadie, ‘Rational theology’, in A. A. Long (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to*

theme of 'identities and transformations', I want to ask: how much of the Olympians do the first Greek philosophers retain in their world-systems? The answer, of course, is not straightforward, for reasons it will be the purpose of this chapter to explore.

## GREAT AND LESSER GODS: PERSONS, POWERS AND THINGS

Perhaps the most obvious change over the period, to which a good deal of attention has been rightly paid, is the emergence of a more universal conception of the divine, as a single, usually governing, cosmic divinity. On this level, against the temptation to speak of monotheism, I want to argue for more continuity than is usually seen. Even when they declare themselves for a greater god of some kind, the early philosophers never directly attack the further assumption of a *plurality* of divine persons or superhuman agents, capable of benefiting or harming us, perhaps even with some expectations of proper behaviour. As in Plato's *Timaeus*, which I take to be relatively orthodox in this respect, the Olympians are maintained, so that there is no overt challenge to cultic traditions and popular notions, but they are nevertheless subordinated to a greater and more abstract god (in Plato's case, two greater gods, the world-soul and the demiurge.) The only exceptions to this occur in the context of Eleatic thought, where we find a much more sweeping and fundamental questioning of the world as we know it. But in that case the gods are not directly targeted, only implicitly so, as part of the world.

On another level, as formulated by Freud above, it is debatable whether there is enough continuity in the concept of divinity to allow for a useful comparison of the traditional gods to those of the philosophers. If, as just noted, the most conspicuous trend over the period is the tendency to elevate one 'great god' above –if not necessarily to

(footnote 1 *continued*)

*Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 205–24; L. Gerson, *God and Greek Philosophy: Studies in the Early History of Natural Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990); D. Babut, *La religion des philosophes grecs* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974); O. Gigon, 'Die Theologie der Vorsokratiker', in *La Notion du divin depuis Homère jusqu'à Platon = Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique*, vol. 1 (Vandoeuvres and Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1952), pp. 127–55, repr. in O. Gigon, *Studien zur antiken Philosophie* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1971), pp. 41–68; G. Vlastos, 'Theology and philosophy in early Greek thought', *Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1952), pp. 97–123, repr. in D. W. Graham (ed.), *G. Vlastos: Studies in Greek Philosophy. I: The Presocratics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 3–31; W. Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947).

the exclusion of – others, another way of characterizing early Greek theological thinking is to see in it a developing contrast between two initially overlapping, but in the end divergent concepts. On the one hand is the traditional picture of gods as persons or agents of great power, versus, on the other, the characterization of whatever is ultimate, highest or most fundamental for a given thinker as divine. The result is an increasing polarity between two ways of conceptualizing the gods: divine persons, on the one hand, versus divine elements on the other.

Of course, in an important sense, this contrast is already present in Homer and Hesiod, where alongside the main gods of cult there are a great many other divinities who are not recipients of any cult, from various personifications or abstractions to the phenomena of nature, Night, Earth, Sea and so forth. In Hesiod, it is granted that these powers and/or world bodies arose before the Olympians were on the scene, even if the *Theogony* has it as its main goal to describe the supremacy of Zeus as ruler over them all, thereby confirming the Olympians as the proper focus of cult, the ultimate dispensers of ‘good things’ at the centre of control.<sup>2</sup> At this earliest stage, Hesiod, while not overtly casting every divinity as anthropomorphic, does seem to think of them all as both willing agents and concentrations of stuff or powers, most often arrayed into affinities or polarities.<sup>3</sup> In the next period, the one that concerns us, this process continues at a more abstract level, after the rejection of anthropomorphic gods by Xenophanes, but there is still no clear theoretical division between life and thought, or between inanimate matter and more abstract properties and powers. Since thinking and life are treated as fundamental to the world, or at least no less so than all its other aspects, it made sense to call the worlds’ powers divine, as much as to think of the gods as physical principles. ‘All is full of gods.’<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, it is possible to note an increasing polarity precisely on this axis, where some physical principles are more powerful, alive, sentient or controlling than others. This line of development,

2 Vlastos, in *Studies in Greek Philosophy*, vol. I, p. 10: ‘Hesiod’s teaching of divinity, on the other hand, puts the object of the public cult at its centre. The information it conveys and the assurance it offers about the divine order make the acts of the cult sensible propositions to a thrifty, calculating, peace-loving worshipper, such as Hesiod himself and the rural public to which he spoke.’

3 For a fuller characterization, see A. P. D. Mourelatos, ‘Heraclitus, Parmenides and the naïve metaphysics of things’, in E. N. Lee et al. (eds), *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos* (Van Gorcum: Assen, 1973), pp 16–48.

4 So Thales, according to Aristotle, *De anima* I.5, 411a8. Compare also Gigon, ‘Die Theologie’, pp. 162ff, from the discussion section for such a characterization.

eventually leading to a full theoretical separation between the material and the spiritual or mental, is more important still than the tension between mono- and polytheism.

What I mean by that is best illustrated by contrasting the more modern definition of God or a god as a *supernatural* agent with the options open to the Presocratics. In every case but that of the atomists, and perhaps even including them, the gods are always part of the natural order, that is, there is yet no *theoretical* basis for denying the real or possible existence of gods, immortal persons or at least purposive agents of superhuman power and duration. Only towards the end of our period do we notice attempts to constrain certain of these inherited qualities, which are pruned away as they prove incompatible with fuller and more definite conceptions of the natural world and with the limits these set to the inherited notion of a god. These developments occur alongside the rise of atheism as a possibility, in the last thirty or so years of the fifth century, but I would argue that these first denials of the gods' existence are not the same as an argument for the physical impossibility of gods.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see, these 'scientific' constraints on the nature of the divine become so great in Democritus, and his own conception of the divine so attenuated, that the term 'divine' in his thought is mainly a statement of value.

Because of space constraints, and given the relative poverty of evidence concerning the views of the Milesians on the gods, which cannot be assessed independently from an exercise in source-criticism, I begin with Xenophanes.<sup>6</sup>

### XENOPHANES

The importance of Xenophanes (570/60–478 BC) for the history of Greek theological thought has been variously assessed, but his fragments remain the starting point for any discussion.<sup>7</sup> His work includes hexameter verses on topics in natural science, elegiac verses on proper

5 For discussion of early atheism, with guidance to further bibliography, see J. N. Bremmer, 'Atheism in antiquity', in M. Martin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 11–26; D. Obbink, *Philodemus: On Piety, Part 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 1–23; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 226ff.

6 Still the best work on Anaximander's view of the gods is D. Babut, 'Le divin et les dieux dans la pensée d'Anaximandre', *REG* 85 (1972), pp. 1–32.

7 In what follows I am heavily indebted to J. H. Leshner, *Xenophanes of Colophon, Fragments: A Text and Translation with a Commentary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 96ff, who should be read for fuller details and the history of interpretation. The translations are my own.

behaviour at symposia and various civic virtues, and *silloi* or hexameter satires in which he criticizes received ideas about the gods and explains certain physical phenomena. The specific interest he presents resides in the coexistence of Ionian science with various claims about the gods, yet without any attempt to integrate the two, or at least so it can seem. But if his gods are not novel in that precise respect, they are hardly the gods of the poetic tradition:

- B 12 Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods  
everything which among men is a jibe and a reproach:  
stealing, adultery and mutual deceit.
- B 14 But mortals think that gods are born  
wear clothes, have a body and speak.
- B 16 Ethiopians say their gods are flat-nosed and black  
Thracians that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired.
- B 15 But if cattle, horses and lions had hands  
or could draw with their hands and produce works as men do,  
then they would draw images of gods or make statues [of them],  
each of them exactly as are their own bodies,  
horses gods like horses and cattle gods like cattle.<sup>8</sup>

Xenophanes' critique of the traditional picture of the gods covers both the immoral behaviour attributed to them, particularly in literature, and the overtly anthropomorphic conception of their appearance in Greek art more generally. The first is in fact something of an exaggeration, since Xenophanes does not claim that Homer's gods are consistently evil, only that some of them, for example Hera in the *Iliad*, are sometimes shown to be acting vindictively or maliciously. Xenophanes here limits himself to laying bare the contradiction between normal expectations of human behaviour and that of the gods as depicted in epic, but the fragment does not go beyond it to provide a positive formulation of divine moral perfection such as we find later in Plato, and probably in Socrates, to the effect that (a) god is only ever a cause of good.

On the question of the bodily appearance of the gods, Xenophanes questions the anthropomorphic image first by formulating it explicitly in B 12: humans imagine the gods in their own image. B 14 goes a stage

<sup>8</sup> Transposing verse 2 to the end, which has some manuscript authority, but mainly for the sake of an easier rendering in English.

further by surveying the different regional variations of the phenomenon. This displays the arbitrariness of these specific details of skin and eye colour. In the longest fragment, the process is extended beyond the human frame of reference, by means of a lively contrary-to-fact image, the amusing caricature of animals making gods in their own, animal image. The negative associations of the latter do not directly disprove anthropomorphism as much as weaken its claim upon us by showing that it is an assumption generated unthinkingly by one's locale. This process of articulation, however, does provide the means whereby to question and therefore debate what had previously only been given, if that is not too unfair to the literary tradition.<sup>9</sup>

But on this second topic Xenophanes does not merely limit himself to criticizing received ideas about the gods; he also advances some positive claims of his own. Most importantly, in fragment DK B 23 to 26, he introduces his greatest god:

B 23 εἷς θεός, ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,  
οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοῖος οὐδὲ νόημα.

One god, greatest among men and gods  
in no way similar to mortals either in body or thought.

B 24 whole he sees, whole he knows, and whole he hears

B 25 but without effort he stirs all things with the thought of  
his mind

B 26 ever does he remain in the same space, not moving at all  
nor is it fitting for him to go about, now to one place and  
now to another

Scholarly debate on the topic, which starts from these passages, is thankfully no longer quite as fixated on monotheism as it once was.

9 The degree to which the gods of literature correspond to those of ritual and daily life, or again the extent to which Homer and Hesiod influenced ritual practices themselves, cannot be precisely quantified or explored here. For a good account of the *positive* effect of systematization Homer and Hesiod wrought upon what must have previously been a confused maze of local traditions see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 119–25. On the question of anthropomorphism it seems prudent to recognize some doubts on the part of the poets. The author of the *Iliad*, for one, systematically avoids in his portrayal of the gods any reference to their savouring sacrificial fumes, and is even quite coy on the topic of their consuming nectar and ambrosia; see G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary. II: Books 5–8* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990), pp. 10–14.

The impulse behind that can be explained in part by the tendency in our ancient sources to foist various anticipations of later thought on Xenophanes, Eleatic monism in particular.<sup>10</sup> But the extant evidence, considered without prejudice, provides a suitable corrective to any such interpretation. First, the references to plural gods in B 23, B 12–16 quoted above and B 18 and 34, not quoted, cannot simply be explained away. The misconceptions Xenophanes sought to dispel are criticized in the name of these *plural* deities, not of a single one, and it is difficult to imagine that his critical eye would have left such a gigantic target to one side, had his views been firmly monotheistic. Second, although we have no fragments proper addressing the relations these gods would entertain, there is some doxographic evidence, testimonium A 32 (= Pseudo-Plutarch, *Miscellanies* 4):

He shows as well concerning the gods that there is no domination among them. For it is not holy for one of the gods to be lord over others. And none of them is in need of any other of them more generally.

The negative cast of the comments, once again rejecting an inherited notion, here domination by one god over others, seems diagnostic of authenticity. Xenophanes perhaps stressed the point because his introduction of the *one, greatest god* could have aroused expectations of a divine hierarchy, most naturally understood in terms of Zeus, king of the gods. The explanation added for this lack of social hierarchy is that none of the gods requires the help or assistance of the others. This positive claim about the divine autonomy of all gods cuts both ways, both to refuse the greatest god any deficiency, as in the need for subjects or servants, and to deny the requirement for higher control of unruly lower deities. Xenophanes' idea seems to be that a divine company where all members are completely good and self-sufficient would be a realm of perfect understanding: there may remain inequalities in size or power, but there would be no disagreement or coercion.<sup>11</sup>

10 See Leshner, *Xenophanes of Colophon*, pp. 98ff, for a fuller critique of these earlier interpretations, while a good earlier discussion is M. C. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 1971), pp. 66–85. Some recent claims for monotheism include G. S. Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983<sup>2</sup>), p. 170, and M. Schofield, 'The Ionians', in C. C. W. Taylor (ed.), *The Routledge History of Philosophy. I: From the Beginning to Plato* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 47–87 at 72–4. For a survey of the ancient doxographic tradition, see J. Mansfeld, 'Theophrastus and the Xenophanes doxography', *Mnemosyne* 40 (1980), pp. 286–312.

11 Compare Plato, *Euthyphro* 5e–6d, where it is the one point Socrates will not accept about the gods, viz. that they quarrel and wage war on one another.

Xenophanes' motives for introducing this new greatest god are less obvious, since he does not argue for its existence, at least according to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I 986b 21–5:

Xenophanes, the first of those who declare all is one (for Parmenides is said to have been his pupil), made nothing clear, nor does he appear to have grasped at the nature of either of these causes [i.e. the unity being definable with respect to either the material substrate or formal criteria], but, considering the whole heaven, he declares that the One is the god.

Before speculating upon one possible motivation for Xenophanes introducing his greatest god, let us outline what we do know about it. Consequent upon the critique of mortal assumptions outlined above, the greatest god is *unlike* mortals in mind or body. The least we can say with confidence is that he thus seems to have body *of some sort*, though not in human shape, of course, or even spherical (despite later ancient attempts to read Xenophanes as an Eleatic advocate of a spherical world), and that his thought surpasses human limitations, in terms of both accuracy and understanding (as implied by B 34). In fact, while he does not have organs of perception, he is nevertheless omniscient and world-controlling, though perhaps not omnipotent. Certainly, in our extant sources he did not create the world, which is eternal, like him. (Might he be capable of destroying it, or surviving that destruction? Xenophanes does not appear to have considered either question.) Finally, the god does not move from place to place. B 25 and B 26 in particular seem to indicate that he is, *somehow*, tied to the world, in control of it but not independent of it. What this overall arrangement reminds us of is a sort of mind–body relation between the world and the greatest god, the totality of it conceived as a living thing. In other words, Xenophanes' greatest god is the world's soul or mind. Later parallels for such a scheme include the world-soul of Plato's *Timaeus* or Anaxagoras' *nous* or, before Xenophanes, the cosmos-controlling elements of the Ionians.<sup>12</sup> As for the motive for this novelty, very tentatively, one might suggest that Xenophanes may have been prompted to introduce the *greatest god* out of a concern for a better proportionality between the world, Aristotle's whole heaven (the body) and its single controlling power. While Homer's Zeus was able to shake all of Olympos with a nod (*Iliad* I. 530), Xenophanes may have thought that still insufficient, compared to

12 For a fuller examination of possible parallels, see R. Palmer, 'Xenophanes' Ouranian god in the fourth century', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 16 (1998), pp 1–34.



the bulk of the whole world. *His* great god stirs *all things with the thought of his mind*, much as our mind controls the whole of our body with a thought. This is, on Xenophanes' part, a radical, centralizing increase in divine power. Although the phrase *the thought of his mind* remains awkward and raises more problems than it solves, perhaps thinking of it in that way offers a further suggestion as to what distinguishes the great god from the smaller ones: freed from the burden of central control, to which they are in any case unequal, they can move about.

The above fragments, we do well to remember, come from a thinker who had much to say on the topic of natural science in the Ionian tradition, and who even undertakes to provide a natural explanation of many impressive and uncanny phenomena associated with divine power: St Elmo's fire, rainbows, thunderbolts. But if we then ask Xenophanes what is the nature or *phusis* of the god(s), or how they interact with the visible world, which on his own theory is ultimately made of earth and water (B 29 and 30), no answer is on offer in our evidence.<sup>13</sup> Rather than lament the lack of systematicity of his thought, we should probably consider this noteworthy in its own right. In terms of the tension between divine person and divine principles outlined above, we should say that it does not yet apply to Xenophanes: his god(s) are still all 'divine person(s)', in the sense that they are first and foremost knowers and rational agents. But they do not appear subordinate to the order of nature, or even part of it in any clear sense. Perhaps Xenophanes was innocent of what seems to us an obvious requirement: it simply did not occur to him that any connection could be made. More generously, we could also say that, in the light of the scepticism he displays in fragment B 34 about human intellectual limitations, which he frames in terms of the traditional gap between men and gods, it may have seemed to him that relating the two areas was beyond reasonable human conjecture.<sup>14</sup>

13 The best suggestion is by A. P. D. Mourelatos, 'The cloud-physics of Xenophanes', in Curd and Graham, *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, pp. 134–68. Mourelatos suggests a type of material monism of water/vapour/air for all phenomena above the plain of largely inert earth, and at p. 156 he proposes that the greatest god is the moving cause of the water/vapour/air domain. This is highly attractive and helps relate Xenophanes more closely to the other Ionians, especially Anaximenes, and later Diogenes of Apollonia, although the connection may prove overly subtle: the greatest god is only the moving cause or soul of water/vapour/air. But unlike water etc., the greatest god does not move about. Further, to my knowledge there is no evidence in the doxography for a one-to-one identification of god and water/vapour/air, which one might have expected, at least as a garbled version of this more complex position.

14 So Leshner, *Xenophanes of Colophon*, pp. 182–6. The best support for this comes from B 34.2, where, in what appears to be a summing up of his teachings, Xenophanes separates the gods, on the one hand, from his physics, 'all the other things I mention'. This seems to indicate that he considered the two to be separate domains.

### HERACLITUS: DIVINE FIRE AND COSMIC INTELLECT

The contrast with Heraclitus (fl. c. 500) in that respect is striking. Put to him the same question and the short answer is that god is 'fire', even if putting it that bluntly is, admittedly, quite inimical to his own thought and mode of exposition. Indeed, the reticence to generalize over 'all things', which I have just suggested may have been to Xenophanes' credit, is precisely that which Heraclitus faults in him and others (B 16). Heraclitus' conception of wisdom is the impulse to see how all things are related or, more strongly, are 'one'. In other words, the role and significance of any one part of his system is best grasped when it is understood within his *logos* as a whole, so that in order to discuss the nature of Heraclitean fire, we should say at least a few words to fill in the broader picture.<sup>15</sup>

Heraclitus' most sweeping statement about the nature of the world is B 30:

This cosmos, the same for all, no one of gods or men has made it,  
but it always was, always is and always will be an ever-living fire,  
burning in measure and extinguishing itself in measure.

Against the Ionian tradition of cosmogony, in which the world comes to be out of something that was not there before, Heraclitus insists on the eternal stability of the world as a closed system. Basic to this cosmology, and underlying the full range of visible phenomena, Heraclitus posits a threefold elemental scheme of earth, water and fire, with the elements arranged in a hierarchy of interlocked transformations:

- B 31a The turnings of fire: first sea, and of sea the half is earth,  
the other half fireburst.
- B 31b <earth> is poured out as sea, and is measured into the  
same ratio as it was before it became earth.

Other fragments use the language of birth and death to describe the reciprocal transformations of the elements, for example B 36:

15 The standard introduction on how to approach Heraclitus is C. H. Kahn's 'On reading Heraclitus', in his *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 87–95. Most of the evidence is collected in G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), pp. 307–65, and M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus* (Merida, Venezuela: Loa Andes University Press, 1967), pp. 259–304. On the novel application of the term *kosmos*, 'arrangement', 'decoration', to the universe, see Kahn, *Art and Thought*, pp. 133–4.

For souls it is death to become water, for water it is death to become earth; from earth water is born, from water soul.<sup>16</sup>

Here soul seems to stand for fire (or air? see below) but otherwise the scheme is the same as above. This language of death and birth indicates a commitment by Heraclitus to real change of one element or substance into another (both terms are, strictly, somewhat anachronistic), not merely an alteration on the level of appearances. If the workings of the transformation of one element into another remains mysterious, Heraclitus appears to have been less troubled by the mystery of the substrate – whatever it is that preserves the proportionality in the exchanges between elements – than intent on the regularity of the overall rate of exchange. In this respect, then, fire appears no more fundamental than the other parts of the system.

Keeping that limitation in mind, we can now consider the special role it plays among the elements. First, if fire is an element like the other two, it is also the most changeable and dynamic of the three. This changeability and the stress laid upon fire by Heraclitus point to the importance of change and process or ‘flux’ as the true focus of intellectual understanding.<sup>17</sup> Second, fire is intimately connected to cognition and life in Heraclitus. As is now broadly recognized, Heraclitus weaves a set of correlations between macrocosmic patterns, fire in the external world, and what we would more properly call psychological descriptions. B 36 is perhaps the star instance of an equation, where the death of souls is described in terms of an elemental transformation into water, but many of the cosmic fragments can also yield a psychological meaning. The lesson of this double applicability of most Heraclitean imagery is that both realms are structured by *logos*, that they are in a sense grounded in the parallel structures of thought and world.

This important insight is perhaps Heraclitus’ most significant teaching, but it is also crucial for understanding how it legitimizes for him, in ways we would find difficult to accept, an equation between the world as an intelligible structure, which we could come to know by study, and an ‘intelligent’ world, as a living, rational thing. Fire in

16 Compare B 76: ‘Fire lives the death of earth, and air lives the death of fire, water the death of air, earth the death of water’, which differs from above by its inclusion of air in the scheme. Marcovich, *Heraclitus*, excludes the fragment but Kahn, *Art and Thought*, pp. 238ff, defends it. For recent discussion, see G. Betegh, ‘On the physical aspects of Heraclitus’ psychology’, *Phronesis* 52 (2007), pp. 3–32 at 15–24, and my comments below.

17 See D. W. Graham, ‘Heraclitus: flux, order and knowledge’, in Curd and Graham, *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, pp. 169–88 at 176–88, whom I follow in this section.

particular seems to be all at once an element and a controlling divinity (and also the life stuff of the cosmos and the principle of intelligence). The first two aspects of this one concept can be made conspicuous by juxtaposing B 41, B 64 and B 32:

For the wise is one, mastering the understanding by which he steers all things through all.

Thunderbolt steers all.

One, the wise alone, both wants and does not want to be called by the name of Zeus [or life].

In the first two fragments, Heraclitus describes the world-governing intelligence, 'the wise', through the image of steering, but it is notable that B 41 stresses its intelligence, whereas B 64 associates it with fire. In B 32, the name of Zeus only evokes the governing of the world, that god's traditional function, while the desire not to be so called, with a partial pun on life (*zēnos*), seems meant to recognize both the continuity and the novelty of his own conception of the divinity.

On this point then we can see a first contrast with Xenophanes, not so much in the question of a new conception of a single world-governing deity, as in Heraclitus' willingness to provide a *physical* account of it, as fire, which Xenophanes seemed to shy away from. The prompt for this appears to be Heraclitus' view of the world as an organic whole and an unwillingness to leave any part of the system unrelated to the others.

In another respect, the notion raised above, that the great god of Xenophanes is a sort of world-soul, can be compared to fire in Heraclitus, which, once again, is not identical with the 'all things' it steers or controls. Consider B 67:

God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and famine. It changes as does <fire?> which, when it is mingled with balms is called by the name of each one's scent.

The first line invites a direct equation of god (singular) with a set of opposites. It seems to say that god is all of them. The comparison of the burning of various balms, however, sets up an opposition between the plural perfumes, perceived as distinct entities by the act of naming, and the fire which is both common to them all and the active element which enables all of them to manifest themselves – while it simultaneously consumes them. Further, in terms of religious content, there is

an inversion of normal valuation, whereby the perfumes, normally considered precious offerings in themselves, are in fact only capable of producing scent in so far as they are activated by the fire. It is thereby shown to be more valuable than them. The important element is the fire, not the perfumes, or rather the perfumes when activated by the fire. But the perfumes are not the fire.

What these shifting contours bring to mind is the set of difficulties, familiar from later Greek philosophy, of attempting to define the soul, where many of the same unresolved tensions are at play. In one, more obvious sense, Heraclitus' world-soul/god can be defined in terms of an opposition to the body: in Heraclitus fire is opposed to the other elements as a group in so far as it plays the part of 'animator' and controller of the body, here the (non-burning) balms or earth and water. In another sense, the god/soul is definable as the compound, or rather the several different compounds, the product of fire plus each of the several balms, each smell itself being a separate actuality, comparable to the different functions of a living thing (growing, walking, waking, seeing, etc.). Most broadly of all, god/soul is the unified sum total of these several capacities, organized into sets of rational opposites, including the control and conscious awareness of them.<sup>18</sup>

Alongside the cosmic super-Zeus, Heraclitus remains committed, like Xenophanes, even more so, to a plurality of divinities. The two most relevant fragments are B 53 and B 62:

War is the father of all things, of all things the king. And some he has shown as gods, some as men; some he has made slaves, others free.

Immortals are mortals, mortals immortals, living the others' death, dying the others' lives

War or conflict, yet another facet of the dynamic organizing principle, generates a variety of possible individual fates. In this respect, the second half of the first fragment is an assertion of continuity with tradition, for it sees conflict as a precondition for the world as it appears, including plural gods. But if that is something of a concession, the second fragment marks an open challenge to the traditional Iliadic gap between gods and men. In B 62 Heraclitus retains the polar

18 My comparison draws mostly on Aristotle's attempts to define the (human) soul in *De anima* and beyond. I am not, however, claiming that any of the definitions attempted in Aristotle map perfectly onto Heraclitus, merely that they suggest certain ways to articulate some of the intuitions implied by Heraclitus' different images.

relationship between men and gods, but reconfigures it as a reciprocal process of exchange. The process of reciprocal transformation it supposes brings to mind the elemental transformations discussed above, except that now the plural gods, by being included within that process, are also thereby subject to death (and rebirth; compare B 88). It may be that on this point Heraclitus displays a conflict between his conception of the ever-living fire or eternal cosmic god and the 'mortal' gods of B 62, or between his 'god' and 'the gods'. I will turn to that in a moment, but before doing so, we should first ponder the implications of this cycle of generation and destruction on the two lower terms, that is, the relation between mortals and plural gods. This is important, both in its own right and for the light which it sheds upon Heraclitus' conception of himself, and of the nature of his message.

The lesson of B 62 is that the gods are *part of* the natural world. As for his 'god', so for 'the gods', Heraclitus rejects Xenophanes' diffidence as to their status, and includes them within his physics. Notable as well is the deliberate shock-value of putting the statement that *gods become mortals* first. That, however, is merely the converse of the notion of a mortal becoming a god, which although something of a transgression, was familiar enough as a mortal aspiration, having figured in myth for a long time. That it was gaining in prominence through the mystery religions of Heraclitus' own day is hardly to be doubted. Heraclitus seems to be exploiting this background to shock his audience by turning the notion around, yet at the same time to be arguing for its soundness as merely following from what was already becoming more established. In other respects, B 62 is as good a key as we possess to understand Heraclitus' own personal aspirations. Since he clearly considered himself above ordinary men, the scheme of B 62 provides an obvious hint as to his ultimate destination: up, rather than down; post-mortem survival, rather than annihilation.

Less clear is the exact form such survival might take. Again, his appropriation of the language of the mysteries, as in B 27, indicates a certain approval of its aims, at least if properly understood, *more Heracliteo*. Indeed, the charge of plagiarism he reserves for Pythagoras (B 129) is something more appropriate to a rival, and is more specific than a general accusation of imperfect wisdom.<sup>19</sup> But if we do find a

19 On Heraclitus and the mysteries, see M. Adoméas, 'Heraclitus on Religion', *Phronesis* 45 (1999), pp. 87–113. On B 129 see now C. A. Huffman, 'Heraclitus' critique of Pythagoras in fragment 129', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 35 (2008), pp 19–47, which is mostly about Pythagoras, but who at p. 45 refers to an unpublished paper by M. Schofield, 'Pythagoras the plagiarist', where this claim is more fully examined.

message of salvation in Heraclitus, then probably the most important difference from that found in Pythagoras and the mystery cults is that Heraclitus tried to tell a story about the soul that related it to Ionian physics, with regard to both its current instantiation and its post-mortem destinations. And while he appears to grant the possibility of divinization as something that could be realized by an individual mortal, or as we would say, 'physically possible', he confounds it in turn by stressing its symmetrical opposite, the mortality of the gods. The message, however, is not that gloomy: it is one of cosmic justice. How might this have worked?

Heraclitus' most important contribution to psychology is his elevation of the term *psychê* as the centre of self-consciousness, the true self, above the Homeric conception of the *psychê* as the bat-like creature that only manifests itself as it leaves the body of a fallen warrior.<sup>20</sup> But as just stated, he is also more forthcoming about its *phusis*, and tries to provide an account of it based on its physical nature. B 118, 'Clear light is a dry soul, wisest and best', provides a description of a soul which may well apply to Heraclitus' own, more 'bright' than most. Is the soul then fire for Heraclitus? That may be something of an over-simplification. At most we could then say that soul contains some fire, as its most active and intelligent component.<sup>21</sup> Still, basing ourselves on B 36, 'from earth water is born, from water soul', it is an obvious step to suggest that the next, ultimate stage in the ascent is to fire, or at least to some form of pure air or aether closest to it. These must be the mortal immortals, the 'wakeful guardians of the living and the dead' (B 63), who act as the guarantors of the cosmic order.

What then is the relation between these plural gods and the great cosmic deity? Strictly, it would seem that Heraclitus has two different conceptions of the divine: on the one hand the plural gods of B 62, who alternate in polarity with mortals, and on the other the 'one wise, separate from all other things' (B 108). Beyond the numerical clash between one and many, these are also different in terms of mortality or duration: while the great god seems everlasting, the lesser ones

20 M. Nussbaum, 'Psoche in Heraclitus', *Phronesis* 17 (1972), pp. 1–16 and 153–70; M. Schofield, 'Heraclitus' theory of soul and its antecedents', in S. Everson (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought. 2: Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 1–34. On the general background, see J. N. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

21 To be anachronistically over-precise, it would stand as *nous* to the rest of the soul. For fuller discussion, see Betegh, 'On the physical aspects of Heraclitus' psychology'.

appear to be temporary, if probably very long-lived.<sup>22</sup> It may be that this tension cannot be resolved, at least without explicit recourse to later, more sophisticated metaphysical distinctions, which Heraclitus anticipates only in part or implicitly.<sup>23</sup> Since space precludes a full discussion, I venture that for Heraclitus, the lesser gods can aspire to a certain duration, but that even so they must remain only an episode in the everlasting cosmic fire. Yet, in so far as they contribute to it as a process, Heraclitus sees them as nevertheless constituent of the whole. In that respect, they are analogous to the magistrates or first citizens of the cosmic polis, B 114:

Those who [would] speak with understanding must hold fast to what is common to all, as a state the law, even much more strongly. For all mortal laws are nourished from the one, the divine law. For it has as much power as it wishes, and suffices for all and is overabundant.

Although the state will endure past the life of all its current inhabitants, not all of them play an equal part in its life and ongoing survival. Some play an active part, and help contain and structure its life, while others merely inhabit it, pursuing their private, 'idiotic' lives. But even the most active citizens play their role only briefly, and must in time come to be 'extinguished' and see the flame pass to others.

Against Xenophanes, Heraclitus' greater epistemological optimism leads him to assert that it is possible to attain a higher, more active and 'cosmic' level of consciousness. In other words it is possible to think like, and it would seem apparently thereby to become, gods. His scheme of greatest and lesser gods, on the other hand, is reminiscent of Xenophanes, except that both the one, wise god and the lesser mortal gods are explicit parts of the furniture of the physical cosmos, as intelligent, governing fire. Heraclitus is less forthcoming on the difference between the cosmic god and the lesser divinities, except perhaps to say that the distinguishing mark of the lesser gods is their active awareness of the cosmic governance maintained by the one, greatest god, which they serve and, perhaps, help constitute.

<sup>22</sup> Kahn, *Art and Thought*, pp. 277–80.

<sup>23</sup> Graham, 'Heraclitus', pp. 182–4.



### PARMENIDES: DOES BEING THINK?

Parmenides' only known work, a hexameter poem of which we have substantial fragments, is not, officially at least, a presentation of his own theories, but a divine revelation offered to an unnamed youth by an unnamed goddess, as established in the opening section, B 1:

The mares, which carry me as far as my heart can reach,  
 were my escorts, since they set me upon the famed path  
 of the *daimon*, which carries the knowing man by all cities:  
 so was I borne along. For wise mares were carrying me  
 straining before the chariot, and maids led the way. 5  
 The axle in its naves screeched like a pipe,  
 glowing hot, for it was urged on by two whirling wheels  
 on either side, whenever the maids, daughters of the Sun,  
 sped along in their escort, having left the halls of Night  
 for the light, pushing back their veils from their temples. 10  
 There stand the gates of the paths of Night and Day . . .  
 . . . on through them 20  
 the maids held the chariot and horses straight to the path.  
 And the goddess greeted me warmly: grasping my hand  
 with her right, she spoke thus and addressed me:  
 O youth, fellow driver to immortal charioteers and horses  
 which carry you as you come upon my home, 25  
 Hail! For it was no evil fate which escorted you  
 along this path – far indeed it is from the track of men –  
 but Right and Justice. But you must be told all things,  
 both the unshaken heart of persuasive truth  
 and mortal opinions, in which there is no true trust. 30  
 And you must even learn this too, how things that seem  
 had to be in acceptance, all of them pervading through all.<sup>24</sup>

The meaning of this fantastic scene has been much discussed.<sup>25</sup> I have quoted at some length to give its flavour, but will not attempt a detailed discussion. Overall, the dominant impression in the poem

24 Translation my own, mostly after the text of A. H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Van Gorcum: Assen and Maastricht, 1986), except for line 3, where I keep the standard correction 'cities', and lines 31–2, where the text is problematic; see Coxon's commentary *ad loc.* I have attempted to render in English what I think is a Greek play on words in the last two lines.

25 See most recently the opposite conclusions of the studies by H. Granger, 'The poem of Parmenides' poem', *Ancient Philosophy* 28 (2008), pp. 1–20, and L. Gemelli-Marciano, 'Images and experience: at the roots of Parmenides' *Aletheia*',

is that the teachings which are to follow are not put forward by the youth, but that he is to be the passive recipient of divine instruction. Does this therefore make Parmenides' poem primarily a revelation and thus religious in intent? On the basis of the proem alone, it would seem hard to deny. The rest of the poem, however, is much less obviously amenable to such a reading. For now, let us merely register this first impression as such.

After the proem, the goddess' teachings fall into two main sections, usually termed the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion. In the first, the goddess introduces and argues for a novel concept, *to eon*, which I will translate as Being (although in some respects it can be better rendered by Reality, or perhaps 'the Real'). In fragments B 2 to B 7 she proposes to the youth a *krisis*, or radical choice between only two possible 'paths of thought', first 'the one, that it is' and the other, 'that it is not.' The goddess rejects the second path as unlearnable or absurd, and then (B 8.1–2) concludes that 'only one account of the path is left: that it is'. In B 8, our longest fragment, she refines this concept by introducing the many 'signs' or markers of Being, what we would call its attributes, for which she then proposes a number of supporting arguments. As given at B 8.3–4, these attributes are: ungenerated and indestructible, whole, of a single kind, unmoved and perfect.<sup>26</sup>

(footnote 25 continued)

*Ancient Philosophy* 28 (2008), pp. 21–48, both worthy contributions, in very different ways. As M. Bowra suggested, echoing Diels, 'The proem of Parmenides', *CPh* 32 (1937), pp. 97–112 at 98, it is possible that the opening passage was intelligible only in terms of a now lost Pythagorean and/or secret Eleatic religious background. The best attempt to delve into this background remains W. Burkert, 'Das Proömium des Parmenides und die Katabasis des Pythagoras', *Phronesis* 14 (1969), pp. 1–30, repr. in W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften VIII* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2008), pp. 1–27, while P. Kingsley's interpretation, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness, CA: Golden Sufi Center, 1999), is now inspired, now hopelessly over-specific. For a dense but highly informative account, see Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides*, pp. 9–17. Another important consideration is the possibility that we cannot hope to make sense of the proem except by hindsight, once we have understood the main doctrinal contents of the poem, to which it alludes; see J. Mansfeld, 'Insight by hindsight: intentional unclarity in Presocratic proems', *BICS* 42 (1995), pp. 225–32. Of the two later sections, the proem seems to anticipate the Way of Opinion more than it does the Way of Truth.

<sup>26</sup> For analysis of B 8, see Coxon's commentary to his (1986) edition and now R. McKirahan, 'Signs and arguments in Parmenides B 8', in Curd and Graham, *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, pp. 189–229. McKirahan's analysis, the most detailed known to me, concludes that the arguments are less logically cogent than is sometimes claimed, and that in fact Parmenides claims up to fourteen attributes for Being, although many of them are at bottom 'notionally equivalent', so that he estimates that we have eight or nine. Most significantly, McKirahan shows that only the first two are directly argued for, whereas the other attributes are to varying degrees merely asserted or partially argued.

Although a long tradition of interpretation, going back to Plato, has held that this section of the poem is an argument for monism, the claim that there is only one thing, Being, it is perhaps more accurate to describe Parmenides' thought as anti-pluralist.<sup>27</sup>

In the Way of Opinion, which is much less well preserved, Parmenides provides a cosmology in the Ionian tradition, which the goddess openly brands 'deceitful' (B 8.52). Most probably it was longer than the Way of Truth, and the few extant sections include an account of certain standard 'scientific' topics, such as embryology and the physiology of thought. Strikingly, the whole cosmogony is based exclusively on two opposed principles, Fire and Night.

The relation between the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion is, to say the least, problematic. For it is highly puzzling that Parmenides should have bothered to undertake the overtly dualist/pluralist cosmogony of the Way of Opinion, if it was already disallowed by the Way of Truth. The most established scholarly interpretation of this relation holds that the Way of Opinion remains wholly false, but that it is a dialectical exercise in 'what-if' cosmogony, and functions as a sort of test for the student, who can train himself to spot its incoherence; more recently a number of cases have been made for a much more positive reading of the Way of Opinion, as a kind of second best.<sup>28</sup>

Given that we now have a picture of the rest of the work, we can begin to ask ourselves how, if at all, we should reconcile the bulk of the poem with the religious format of the opening section. Until quite recently, the only option was to reject the poem, or dismiss it as allegorical. Just as the Way of Truth appears to preclude any assent to the Way of Appearance, this would be all the more reason to dismiss the poem as irrelevant to the main thesis of the work, an exposition of the

27 Thereby making Melissos (fl. 441 BC) the first monist; see J. Barnes, 'Parmenides and the Eleatic One', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 61 (1979), pp. 1–21. For fuller discussion, see R. Palmer, *Plato's Reception of Parmenides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

28 A few representative examples: G. E. L. Owen, 'Eleatic questions', *CQ* 10 (1960), pp. 84–102, repr. in M. Nussbaum (ed.), *Logic, Science and Dialectic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 3–26; C. H. Kahn, 'The thesis of Parmenides', *Review of Metaphysics* 22 (1968–9), pp. 700–24; A. P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides: A Study of Word, Image and Argument in the Fragments* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2008<sup>2</sup>); D. Gallop, *Parmenides of Elea: A Text and Translation with an Introduction* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1982). Of those more favourable to the way of Opinion, see P. Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998; Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2005<sup>2</sup>), and D. W. Graham, *Explaining the Cosmos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 172–85, who there reviews different strategies of interpretation.

nature of impersonal Being. But since so much turns on how we conceive of Being, and this conception is so strong that it actually requires us to reject as incompatible the opening section of the poem, which, unlike the Way of Truth, is not actively dismissed by the goddess in the poem, it seems crucial to consider whether our conception of it is completely right. Specifically, might there be a way of understanding the Way of Truth that does not require us to dismiss the poem? As I see it, any solution will be set by the parameters of this prior question: just how impersonal or not was Parmenides' conception of Being?

As it happens, opinion on this precise question has recently been the object of a revolution. Against the long-dominant tradition of interpretation of Parmenides' Being as impersonal, A. A. Long has made an influential case for understanding it as not only an object of thought, but also a thinking subject.<sup>29</sup> The issue is complex, but on the whole I am inclined to agree with the revolution. Without ignoring the appeal of the alternative, impersonal interpretation of Being, in what follows I give my own version of the key arguments in its favour. Although I take it to be valid in its own right as an interpretation of the Way of Truth, it also has the advantage of allowing us to make much better sense of the poem.

The first observation to be made is the concession that Parmenides *never* directly calls Being a god or divine. This may seem a decisive indicator of authorial intent, and a key to the characterization of the whole work as non-religious, since its key purpose is to introduce a highly abstract theory of reality, one which leaves the manifest world behind. For us, this is relatively unproblematic, habituated as we are to the notion of an impersonal world that at its most fundamental level consists of inanimate objects and forces. But to leave it at that fails to recognize what a strong break with previous tradition this would be. Not only do all of the thinkers before Parmenides, including the Ionians, call their first principles divine, but Empedocles and Anaxagoras after him also think of the cosmos as alive, or, put another way, think that life and thought are fundamental aspects of reality. Is Parmenides then the first thinker to conceptualize the world

29 A. A. Long, 'Parmenides on thinking Being', *Boston Area Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy* 12 (1996), pp. 125–62, followed by D. Sedley, 'Parmenides and Melissus', in A. A. Long (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 113–33, with a predecessor in G. Vlastos' review of Zafiropoulos, *L'école éléate*, in *Gnomon* 25 (1953), pp. 166–9, and E. D. Phillips, 'Parmenides on thought and Being', *Philosophical Review* 64 (1955), pp. 546–60. I am unaware of any published critiques of the mind–being identity view, except for an unpublished paper by H. Granger.

as fundamentally inanimate, making him, as John Burnet provocatively put it, the father of materialism?<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the strongest evidence for thinking so is that life or thought does not figure among the explicit attributes of Being officially announced at B 8.2–3, while change and motion, the defining features of life, are explicitly disallowed.<sup>31</sup> In this respect it cannot be wrong to see in Parmenidean Being the predecessor of the elements of later thinkers. Further indirect support for this conception of Being is provided by the contrast with the ‘scientific’ cosmogony of the Way of Opinion. Since Being is obviously an attempt to move beyond physics, as the first inroad into the realm of eternal truths available only to the mind, it is almost irresistible to see in Parmenidean Being a predecessor to impersonal Platonic forms, with the caveat that Parmenides was not yet capable of imagining Being without extension. Certainly, when we compare Being to physical first principles, like Atoms, or metaphysical objects of thought, like Forms, in neither case do we assume that they are alive or think.

But recognizing the conceptual advance that Parmenidean Being represents does not amount to a specific denial that it thinks. Once again, none of Parmenides’ predecessors or immediate successors claimed that much, and this is even true of Parmenides himself in the Way of Opinion, which at B 12.3–5 describes the cosmic god, the pilot of the world, at the centre of a set of celestial rings:

In the middle of them is the goddess (*daimon*) who governs all.  
For she rules over hateful begetting and mixture,  
Escorting female to mix with male, and male in turn to female.

Given, then, how much evidence there is that the default archaic conception of the world, before and after Parmenides, is that it is alive or divine, what positive evidence is there for denying thought to Parmenidean Being? Does Parmenides (or the goddess) ever make this particular point? As I understand it, (s)he does not, and the case, such as it is, rests on two arguments from silence: first, the fact that Being is never called a god, and more forcefully, that Parmenides does not include thought within the argued-for attributes of Being.

To the first, we could perhaps reply that it is simply the case that,

30 J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: A. and C. Black, 1892<sup>1</sup>; 1920<sup>3</sup>), p. 182.

31 I can’t resist quoting K. R. Popper’s remark in ‘How the moon might throw some of her light on the two ways of Parmenides’, *CQ* 42 (1992), pp. 12–19 at 16: ‘Parmenides sees life in all its warmth and movement and beauty and poetry. But the icy truth is death.’

unlike Heraclitus' great god, Being has no ambiguous feelings about the name of Zeus, and does not want it *at all* (but see below for one suggestion why). To the second, we can offer a reply in two parts: (1) Parmenides' whole argument for Being has thought or thinking as its foundation, so that it would be puzzling if not contradictory for him to deny its existence. (2) He only argues for those attributes of Being which are novel or even paradoxical, so that he saw no reason to argue for something that was an unchallenged assumption of his day.

Accordingly, the central question is: can we determine that he shared that assumption as well? The key evidence is B 8.34–7. Although the interpretation of the passage is controversial, I think it does show that Parmenides assumes that thought belongs to Being. Here is the passage, with, for clarity's sake, a few lines on either side of the disputed ones:

|                                                  |    |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| ταὐτόν τ' ἐν ταὐτῷ τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτό τε κεῖται |    |
| χοῦτως ἔμπεδον αὐθι μένει· κρατερὴ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη    | 30 |
| πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἔρχει,  |    |
| οὔνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ ἐὼν θέμις εἶναι·      |    |
| ἔστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιδευές· ἐὼν δ' ἂν παντὸς ἐδεῖτο.  |    |
| ταὐτὸν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὔνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.  |    |
| οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ πεφασισμένον ἐστίν, | 35 |
| εὐρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ <ἦ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται   |    |
| ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν |    |
| οὔλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμμεναι·                       |    |

remaining itself within itself it both rests on its own  
and thus remains securely founded. For powerful Necessity  
holds it in the fetters of limit, which constrain it all about,  
because it is not lawful for Being to be incomplete.  
For it is not lacking; if it were, it would lack everything.  
And thinking and that for which the thought is are the same.  
For not without Being, in which it is expressed,  
will you find thinking. For nothing either is or will be  
besides Being, since Fate bound it  
to be whole and immobile.

The translation offered is open to challenge on several points.<sup>32</sup> As I see it, B 8.34–7 is not a return to the foundations of the case for Being,

<sup>32</sup> The text is DK, minus the bracketed [μὴ] of line 33. At line 36 Coxon prints οὐδὲ χρόνος, which may be right. For a key to interpretative alternatives, see McKirahan, 'Signs and arguments', pp. 202–4.

as often suggested, but is part of a supporting argument for the perfection or completeness of Being. Parmenides asserts that Being lacks nothing, for if it were lacking anything, it would be lacking everything. Can we not therefore assume that it also possesses thought? He does not say so in so many words, and this is the core of the difficulty. But I think that he not only assumes it here, which is once again the default assumption for the time, but that the next lines are best understood as a defence against a possible objection to the completeness of Being, one generated from that very assumption.

What Parmenides is arguing here, I suggest, is that *granted that* thought, or active thinking, belongs to Being, this does not threaten the unity of Being, because 'thinking and that for which the thought is are the same'. The point is perhaps made too briefly to escape obscurity, and once more Parmenides does not openly state the assumption that 'Being thinks', but I believe that the best sense that can be made of the passage is to posit that this is what prompts his reply in B 8.34–8. Briefly, the argument can be glossed as follows: Parmenides claims that whenever there is *noein* or successful cognition, for *noein* functions in Greek as success word, then that understanding will 'be the same' as the thing of which it is the thought. (This is just the realist presupposition characteristic of Greek thought throughout antiquity, the notion that true thought has no independent existence prior to its actualization as an identification with the object of thought.) And since Being is all there is, or is closed upon itself, there is no possibility of Being's thought (or more inclusively: Being the thinker) becoming separated from Being (now as object of thought). Thus, Being's thought can never fail, and is always fully realized. And since Being always possesses *noein*, it lacks nothing, QED.<sup>33</sup> This proto-epistemological insight, however, remains secondary to the metaphysical claim that there is nothing else than thinking Being.

From the narrower case for thinking Being, let us now consider how that specific interpretation can help us understand the broader message of the work. Parmenides' claim on this count will remain highly paradoxical, since it still precludes the cosmos, the phenomenal world of change, but also the separate existence of any other things or

33 On *nous* and *noein*, the classic study remains K. von Fritz 'Nous, *noein* and their derivatives in Pre-Socratic philosophy (excluding Anaxagoras)', *CPh* 40 (1945), pp. 223–42 and 41 (1946), pp. 12–34, repr. in A. D. P. Mourelatos (ed.), *The Pre-Socratics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993<sup>2</sup>), pp. 23–85. On realism, see M. Burnyeat, 'Idealism in Greek philosophy: what Descartes saw and Berkeley missed', in G. Vesey (ed.), *Idealism, Past and Present* = Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture series 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), and more recently I. M. Crystal, 'The scope of thought in Parmenides', *CQ* 52 (2002), pp. 207–19.

individuals, such as the youth, sun maids and the goddess. The denial of the separateness of thought from Being, however, saves Parmenides from the internal contradiction of denying the existence of thought, as on the alternative tradition of interpretation criticized above, and thereby sweeping away the foundation of his whole discourse.<sup>34</sup>

But just as it denies the existence of any entities separate from being, it also seems to imply directly the rather bizarre notion that there are no separate thinkers. This is paradoxical, but it is a paradox whose bizarreness remains less harsh than the possible contradiction outlined above. The general point of the work, if it is not completely aporetic, would still seem to be that of articulating an ultimate understanding of reality, completely separate from any partial or subjective or temporal standpoint, the so-called 'point of view of the universe'. It is an effort of abstraction, one which eliminates all attributes it sees as illegitimate because dependent upon polarity and opposition, leaving us only with Being, a non-plural, invariant, thinking thing. The result is that in striving to think only of Being, we do not so much deny our existence as seem thereby to lose our status as distinct thinkers, becoming one, in thought at least, with Being.

This running together of abstraction with introspection, ending with a type of *unio mystica* in Being, seems to me a more accurate historical account of Parmenides' project than the alternative. Saying that is not to deny the scientific or rationalistic aspect of his thought, or the importance of his use of argument; it is a claim about where the argument leads.<sup>35</sup> Such a conclusion, moreover, has to be reached by the youth or through him, by the hearer, since there is no overt statement in the poem to the effect that 'therefore, there are no separate thinkers'. In this regard, it is also notable that the conflict between the ultimate message of the poem and the initial situation of instruction it depicts is kept up past the point where it ceases to apply: the goddess' continued use of the second person singular, for instance 'you will find' at B 8.34, presupposes a continued dialectical context of at least two thinkers, but her insistence a line later that 'besides Being nothing either is or will be' so strongly countermands it that we must suspect that she is now beginning to deploy the irony which is her characteristic tool in the Way of Opinion.<sup>36</sup>

34 See Long, 'Parmenides on thinking Being', p. 147.

35 Vlastos, 'Theology and philosophy', p. 6, puts it neatly: 'their "science" was far more (and less) than science in our sense has any business to be'. See also Vlastos' further comments in n. 16 of that same work..

36 In this way, there is still a clash between the initial situation of the poem and the central tenets of the poem, but it's rather that of monism versus pluralism on the level of thought, i.e. how many thinkers there are, and not between a world-view



According to this interpretation of Parmenides, then, Being is not only the supreme object for thought, but also the supreme thinking subject. Despite Parmenides' refusal to call it god or a god, a number of its attributes unmistakably recall those of the gods, traditional and philosophical, so we can end this section by a final review of both the resemblances and the departures. Most importantly of all, if the interpretation defended above holds, then Being, as a thinker, remains a candidate for personhood, albeit of a highly remote and abstract kind. Its closest relatives remain the great cosmic gods of Parmenides' immediate philosophical predecessors. Of the standard signature features of the cosmic god, supreme wisdom and world governance (and, in some cases, generation), it retains the first at least, which is perfectly captured by the success word *noein*, so it seems difficult to deny continuity on this point. More broadly, if we consider the attributes outlined in B 8.3, then 'indestructible' is notionally very close to Olympian deathlessness, the main traditional attribute of the gods as a whole, while 'ungenerated' certainly applies also to Heraclitus' cosmic god, and 'whole', 'perfect' and 'unmoved' recall that of Xenophanes. The fact that Being is contrasted with cosmogony, the false world *as a whole*, also indicates that it is of the same order as the cosmos itself or in some sense universal.

As for world governance and generation, both of these no longer apply to Being, coherently enough, since no world appears to be there for the generating or the governing, including *inter alia* lesser gods. This point, most probably, is symbolically announced in the proem at lines 14–20, when Justice, *dike*, the keeper of the keys of alternation, is left behind at the gates, while the youth advances beyond her to be greeted by the goddess.<sup>37</sup> For the same reason, Being is not suited to be the object of any type of traditional cult. At most it can serve as an object of intellectual admiration, as when later philosophers set Being alongside the world, rather than in opposition to it, but it is not the kind of divinity one can petition for personal favours.

This, ultimately, holds as well for the question of personal salvation or eschatology in Parmenides. While this theme is undeniably raised by the proem, where the passage to a superhuman realm and the goddess' reassurances to the youth that he has met no 'evil fate' (1.26) cannot

that includes thinkers (the proem) and one that excludes them (impersonal Being). On the clash between number of thinkers, see M. M. Mackenzie, 'Parmenides' dilemma', *Phronesis* 27 (1982), pp. 1–12, for an incisive analysis of this aspect. On irony, see Mourelatos, *Route*, ch. 9.

37 At most this function is supplied very indirectly in the Way of Truth by the metaphor of the fetters of Necessity, which constrain Being within fixed limits. But once again, the image is not meant to convey anything more.

but stir some such hopes, it looks as though this might be a case of authorial manipulation. For if Parmenides seems on the one hand to endorse the possibility of transcending human intellectual limitations, on the other he reinterprets what this means in such a way that the individual self no longer figures in the 'ultimate reality' described by the poem (see also n. 34 above). Once again, such an annihilation of the self is not without parallels in other religious traditions, especially those of a mystic kind, where it can even stand as the formal goal.

With that, I come to a final, if somewhat speculative, reason for recommending the view that Being thinks. It comes from the ability of this scheme to stand as an alternative to the difficulty posed by Heraclitus' greater and lesser gods. If, as suggested above, the mark of the divine for Heraclitus, as opposed to the mortal, was an understanding of the unity of all things and the cosmic purpose of the great god, it was still difficult to ascertain in what way these lesser gods differed from the greater god. Parmenides seems on this count to offer a cleaner cut between mortal and divine thought. Instead of perfect understanding between plural divinities, as perhaps also in Xenophanes, for Parmenides the divine realm's unity is that of a single mind. This more radical solution comes at the cost, which Heraclitus might have refused to pay, of denying the world as structure, as polarity, and with it the ability of the terms 'mortal' and 'divine' to function as correlatives. Indeed, this could even be the reason why Parmenides avoids the terms 'god' or 'divine' for Being: it is primarily a correlative term, whose meaning in part depends on its opposite, mortal. And this polar opposition cannot be countenanced by Parmenides' non-pluralism.

### ANAXAGORAS AND EMPEDOCLES ON THOUGHT AND GODS

On the question of the place of thinking in the cosmos, there is no significant departure in Anaxagoras (c.500–428 BC) or Empedocles (c.490–430 BC), in so far as both still view thinking as basic to their ontologies or non-emergent features of the world. Beyond that, however, their views on the place of thinking in the world are different enough to affect, in a significant way, their conceptions of divinity and divine intelligence. Very roughly, Anaxagoras has a much more autonomous characterization of mind or *nous*, as a homogeneous kind of stuff, among other stuffs out in the world, while Empedocles conceives of thinking as a basic attribute of all matter (B 110.10). For Empedocles, thought as it occurs in compound bodies is a product of the elemental composition of the given body. As we shall see, these different psychological starting points generate very different

frameworks for the range of views they are willing to entertain concerning the gods. The contrast the two display with respect to the gods is, however, not purely a function of their views on thought, but must also reflect real enough differences of general outlook on religion. It is all the more striking for the general similarity of their philosophical systems and the proximity of their respective ages.<sup>38</sup>

In Anaxagoras, the cosmos began in a state of complete confusion wherein no one thing could predominate because all were completely commingled, until *nous* (Mind or understanding/intelligence) initiated a process of cosmic rotation (B 1–4). This rotation, which is still ongoing, was the occasion for the segregation of the basic ingredients of the world, and this separation allowed for the local predominance of certain ingredients over others. In this way, against Parmenides, these elements can be said to become manifest, without conceding that they ever came into being, or arose ‘from nothing’. It is debated how many elements Anaxagoras posited at bottom, whether he thought that there are, simply and irreducibly, as many things as we encounter, or if we should allow for only a limited set of more basic opposites, but this does not affect the more important point that Anaxagoras can thus account for the generation and destruction of particular things by re-describing them as the temporary combination of ever-present elements (B 17).<sup>39</sup>

For Empedocles, the outline of whose system is much clearer, there are only six fundamental first principles: on the one hand, the four elements of earth, air, fire and water, on the other, the two moving/psychological agents of Love and Strife (see especially B 17). Love induces the elements to fuse together, while Strife causes their separation. The two powers seem to alternate in influence over the elements like a gigantic cosmic tide, with at one extreme all four elements united harmoniously under Love into a blissful whole which Empedocles calls the *Sphairos* or god, and at the other a world of Strife, either a state of complete chaos or perhaps the barren purity of completely

38 Although the question is not so hotly contested as it once was, it is still relatively controversial which of the two wrote first, but for present purposes I adopt the view that Anaxagoras published his work before Empedocles. For an up-to-date bibliography on Anaxagoras, see now P. Curd, *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae: Fragments and Testimonia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). On the dates, the best case for the late date is by J. Mansfeld, ‘The chronology of Anaxagoras’ Athenian period and the date of his trial’, *Mnemosyne* 32 (1979), pp. 39–69, and 33 (1980), pp. 84–95. Against it, see L. Woodbury, ‘Anaxagoras and Athens’, *Phoenix* 35 (1981), pp. 295–315, repr. in L. Woodbury, *Collected Writings* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 355–75. On the question of influence, see D. O’Brien, ‘The relation of Anaxagoras and Empedocles’, *JHS* (1970), pp. 93–113.

39 For a review of this debate, see Curd, *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae*, pp. 153–91.

separate elements (the evidence for this phase is inconclusive). At both extremes, it seems that no mortal or temporary individual can exist, and that life as we experience it is confined to the middle tide when both powers operate. Love is what holds us together now, but the current world is also full of Strife and most probably headed for ultimate dissolution under its rising power.<sup>40</sup>

The influence of Anaxagoras over Empedocles is more likely than the opposite, and it would not be completely wrong to say that Strife, as agent of separation, is more or less functionally equivalent to Anaxagoras' Mind, while the addition of Love allows Empedocles to posit an agent for the opposite process of unification. Further, by imposing a limit to the two processes of combination and separation – and Anaxagoras seems to leave Mind's job of separation unfinished or open-ended – Empedocles confines the two within a more defined, closed system. Nevertheless, there remains a strong similarity of approach in so far as both seek to articulate a reply to Parmenides' challenge, in order to 'save' the phenomenal world, including change. Both retain change and becoming as real, but they also seek to respect Parmenidean strictures by means of a strong commitment to 'non-emergence', the idea that 'nothing comes from nothing' or is destroyed into nothing. Change is real, but is not from 'what-is-not'; it is the rearrangement of permanent elements.

What is striking then, against this background of influence or at least strong similarity, is how differently the two thinkers depict the role of gods within their systems. While Empedocles' world is super-saturated with gods, neither the word *theos* nor any of its cognate terms appears in the extant fragments of Anaxagoras, nor is there any doxographical evidence that he even said anything about them. While some of this may be attributable to their different formats, prose for Anaxagoras, hexameter verse for Empedocles, the difference is so extreme as to define the intellectual boundaries of their age.

While Anaxagoras' cosmic Mind obviously reminds us of the cosmic great god, the initiator and governing principle of the world, and was branded as such in later accounts of his thought (see DK A 48), he himself never invites us to use the term. This comes out very clearly in the long B 12, of which I give a slightly abridged version:

40 The reconstruction of the cosmic cycle is controversial. I give a defence of the symmetrical interpretation against alternatives in S. Trépanier, 'Empedocles on the ultimate symmetry of the world', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 24 (2003), pp. 1–57, which also reviews earlier debates. For an original reconstruction, which seeks to go beyond earlier alternatives, see D. Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 31–52.

The other things have a share of everything, but Mind (*nous*) is unlimited and autonomous and is mixed with no other thing . . . for it is the finest of all things and the purest, and it keeps judgement about everything and is mightiest. And however many things have a soul, both the greater and the lesser, Mind controls them all. And Mind controlled the whole rotation, so that it started to rotate at the beginning. And at first it started to rotate from a small bit, and rotated even more, and it will rotate still more in the future. And all the things mixed together, and the things being separated out and all the things being pulled apart, Mind knew them all. And whatever kinds of things were to be, and whatever things were then and are now no longer, and all of the things that are now and will be, all of them, Mind ordered. It also ordered this rotation, in which the things separated off now revolve, the stars and the sun and the moon and the air and the aether. The rotation itself caused them to separate . . . there are many shares of many things, but nothing is completely separated off or pulled apart, one from another, except for Mind, and Mind is all alike, both the greater and the lesser.

Anaxagoras' choice of the term *nous*, and his description of its nature and function, seem designed both to evoke and to frustrate any attempt to identify it with the cosmic god of the philosophical tradition.<sup>41</sup> Its role as initiator of the world, its powers of control and omniscience, all invite an identification with 'the one, greatest god'. But once again, he never calls it a god, and in many other respects his description of it seems intended to force us to think rather of an impersonal stuff or force. Anaxagoras seems to think of it as a physical substance ('finest and purest'), but also, not wholly coherently, as the one exception to his general rule of universal mixture among all stuffs. It is also a sort of general physical force or motive power, setting the other things into rotation, although its operation seems to us more episodic than, for example, a Newtonian gravity, since it *started* the rotation. And unlike Heraclitus' cosmic god, his *nous* does not seem to administer justice or reward excellence of any kind. Socrates' disappointment on this count is understandable.<sup>42</sup>

41 On this dual aspect, still the best treatment is M. Schofield, *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 12–22.

42 *Phaedo* 97c ff: the *locus classicus* for the critique of earlier causation as purely mechanical, lacking a teleological cause. But for an attempt to read Anaxagoras as a providential cosmic farmer, creating worlds hospitable to civilization, and a more pointed version of Socrates' criticism, see now Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics*, pp. 1–30 and 75–92.

Through the frequent contrast Anaxagoras insists upon between Mind and everything else, we garner that for him, there are ultimately only two *classes* of thing: pure (material) Mind and impure mixed matter. But since he does not yet have recourse to the later Platonic concept of incorporeality, the result is a kind of default 'material dualism'. Nevertheless, the essential thing about Mind for Anaxagoras is that it is wholly autonomous, or free from 'bottom-up' physical causation. This is the key to its control, as he argues in the counterfactual example, omitted above, where he claims that, if that were the case, it would become too enmeshed in everything else to be in control.

But if it is possible to understand Anaxagoras' discussion of Mind in this sense as devoted to (lower-case) mind in general or mind as class of thing, the other claims he makes on its behalf do invite us to think of a cosmic individual. On the intellectual plane, it is omniscient, or at least is said to decide everything, while on the physical it is strongest, and in terms of time, it initiated the cosmic rotation. Although Anaxagoras' claim that 'all Mind is alike, the greater and the lesser' makes sense when taken of Mind as a class, or kind of stuff, it is still a source of some bafflement as to how Anaxagoras understands the relation between Mind and the various particular things that have (some) Mind. Obviously, neither you nor I initiated the cosmic rotation, nor are we omniscient, etc., so it seems that whatever Mind we have differs from it.

If we turn to wonder what impression his work as a whole made upon his contemporaries, then, the tradition of Anaxagoras' trial for impiety (DK A 19) would tend to indicate that his apparently studied ambiguity about *nous* was not thought convincing enough. Since he does not drape his *nous* in the traditional epithets of the gods, and does not appear to have a word to say about the lesser gods, this omission must have seemed more like a *rejection*. At most, the phrase 'however many things have a soul, both the greater and the lesser', standardly taken to describe the animal realm, could be glossed to include the gods of tradition among 'the greater' things that have soul. In this regard, it is notable that his specific offence was said to have consisted in declaring the sun a red-hot stone, not denying the gods more generally, the more obvious charge. One can at least wonder if, under cross-examination, the above phrase could have served as an escape clause, forcing the accusation to fasten on his account of *ta meteora*, 'the things up in the air'. All in all, and even allowing for *nous*' ambiguous nature, Anaxagoras comes off as a strongly secular thinker.

The contrast with Empedocles in this respect could not be stronger. Gods and divinities abound throughout his poetry, although it remains an open question whether we should try to fit them all into one or two

systems. The possible division of his thought, as suggested by the two titles under which his poetry has reached us, *The Physics* and *The Purifications*, is unresolved to this day, despite the new material from the Strasburg papyrus which suggests that *The Physics*, at any rate, discussed reincarnation. This does not prove, but adds further plausibility to, the possibility that perhaps all of our fragments come from one single work.<sup>43</sup> In what follows, I will consider the ‘physics’ material first and separately, then the material associated with *The Purifications*, before suggesting some possible links.

Beyond more traditional formulaic invocations of the gods and the Muse Kalliope as an aid to his poetic labours (for example, B 3.1), Empedocles calls the four elements by the name of Olympian deities, Zeus, Hera, Hades and the obscure Nestis in B 6. In B 16 he asserts that ‘endless time’ (ἄσπετος αἰών) will never be lacking for Love and Strife; that is to say, their activity is eternal. If we compare the two sets of principles, it looks as though the four elements, while god-like in some respects, are still less enduring than Love and Strife. To be sure, the four can also come to lose themselves through combination, and form mortal bodies (B 22.3) under the influence of Love. As Empedocles puts it at B 35.14, echoing Heraclitus: ‘they swiftly grew to be mortal (θνῆτ’ ἐφύοντο), who previously had learnt to be immortals’ (τὰ πρὶν μάθον ἀθάνατ’ εἶναι).

Unification under Love culminates eventually in the *Sphairos*, Empedocles’ cosmic god (B 28–30), in whom all four elements are united into one. Although reminiscent of Parmenides’ sphere-metaphor for Being, the cosmic god’s duration is not eternal, and he eventually succumbs to Strife, who reawakens the elements’ desire to go their separate ways (B 30). Unlike Anaxagoras’ *nous*, who controls matter but is exempt from its affections, the *Sphairos* is a product of elemental combination. For the *Sphairos*, this means that he is about as far as one could imagine from a transcendent deity. Possibly that is why Empedocles stresses the *Sphairos*’ happiness rather than its intellectual supremacy. Certainly, for a cosmic or greater god, he comes off as more of a holy innocent than a sovereign power. Aristotle,

43 The *editio princeps* of the new material is A. Martin and O. Primavesi, *L’Empédocle de Strasbourg* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1999). The most significant piece in that respect is section/ensemble d. The fullest defence of the single system and single-system approach is S. Trépanier, *Empedocles: An Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 2004), ch. 1. For a recent, very different, interpretation on the two-systems approach, with more recent bibliography, see O. Primavesi, ‘Physical and mythical divinity’, in Curd and Graham, *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, pp. 250–83. The fullest critical edition, with translation in Czech, is now T. Vitek, *Empedoklés* vol. 2 (Prague: Herrmann and Synove, 2006).

for one, was not impressed. Noting that Empedocles also makes use of the notion that only likes are known by likes, he quips that the Empedoclean god is even less knowledgeable than other mortals, since it does not 'know' Strife (*Metaph.* III 1000b 3–5).

But the elements and the *Sphairos* are hardly the only gods we find in Empedocles' poetry. In B 112, the opening either of *The Purifications* or of the whole work, Empedocles also introduces *himself* as a god:

O Friends, who inhabit the great city by yellow Acragas,  
 atop the heights of the town, mindful of good deeds,  
 respectful havens of strangers, untried of evils,  
 Hail! Before you an imperishable god, no longer mortal,  
 I go about, honoured by all, as I seem, 5  
 crowned with fillets and blooming chaplets.  
 [ ] whenever I come upon flourishing cities,  
 the men and women worship me. They follow me  
 in giant throngs, asking me which is the path to gain,  
 some seeking oracles, others for all manner of illnesses 10  
 were asking to hear a healing spell.

Most probably, this startling initial claim, while evoking the Iliadic gap between gods and men, was later explained in terms of Pythagorean and/or Orphic reincarnation lore. Empedocles' status is further defined in B 115, where he describes a decree of Necessity, according to which he was banished from the divine realm for some transgression, either blood sacrifice or forswearing himself, or both. Although this background is hard to establish and certain aspects of the text of B 115 are controversial, other fragments give a relatively full picture of a cycle of promotions and demotions, once again perhaps Pythagorean in origin, which we should by now recognize as also familiar from Heraclitus. B 146, for instance, describes the top human stages of this cosmic *cursus honorum*, leading to a final promotion:

And in the end they become seers and poets and doctors  
 and leaders of men who dwell upon the earth,  
 from which they blossom into gods, mightiest in honours.

It appears non-incidental that these four 'professions' are attributed to Empedocles in the biographical sources, so that the brash opening of B 112 could be anticipatory, although it may also have been intended to reflect how others saw the author (note 'as I seem' at B 112.5).



B 134, in turn, gives a Xenophanes-inspired account of the life of one such god, whom Ammonius, the source, identifies as Apollo:

For no human head is attached to his limbs,  
 no two branches shout out from his back  
 no feet, no swift knees, no hairy privates.  
 He is nothing but a wondrous thinking-organ  
 sweeping through the whole cosmos with swift thoughts.

This picture of a lesser god as a sort of superhuman celestial animal, as distinct from the great cosmic deity, is perhaps the fullest yet in the tradition. As argued above, it has parallels in Xenophanes and Heraclitus, and later and most conspicuously in Plato's *Timaeus*, where the demiurge fashions the lesser created gods (*Timaeus* 40a). Unlike the latter, however, in Empedocles the *Sphairos* and these lesser gods do not coexist, since the *Sphairos* leaves nothing outside itself but Strife.

This leads naturally enough to the question of the unity of Empedocles' thought, which we can approach here as the question of how, if at all, it might be possible to relate all these different divinities within one coherent enough system.

As a first point, let us note that, with the possible exception of Love and Strife, who never cease their activity (B 16), it seems as if all of the different divinities so named by Empedocles do not inherit full immortality, or eternal duration, but are limited by the nature of the cosmic cycle. These include the *Sphairos* and the four elements as well as the fallen and ascending reincarnated gods of B 115, who are described at line 6 as 'divinities who have obtained a life of long span' (δαίμονες οἷτε μακράϊωνος λελάχασι βίον). This observation, while trivial in itself, is nevertheless important in meeting a frequent objection to the compatibility of the two accounts in modern discussions, namely that nothing immortal, be it god or soul, can be accommodated within Empedocles' cosmic cycle.<sup>44</sup> That now appears to be no more than a Platonic prejudice retroactively projected upon Empedocles, for whom long life seems to be enough to qualify as a god. And given that

44 For example: 'It is therefore no trifling matter if, as many scholars have claimed, this physical cosmology is incompatible with the religious doctrine which Empedocles builds upon it. Is there or is there not a place in his physics for an immortal soul? This is the question to which some answer must be found.' C. H. Kahn, 'Religion and natural philosophy in Empedocles' doctrine of the soul', repr. in Mourelatos, *The Pre-Socratics*, pp. 426–56 at 435. But even Plutarch knew better; see *De defectu oraculorum*, 418e, where he tells us in so many words that Empedocles viewed *daimones* as mortal.

much, we have no grounds for thinking that the Empedoclean concept of the reincarnated soul need imply immortality either.

Yet, even granting that first point, a much more difficult objection comes from the very concept of reincarnation, and the difficulty of ascertaining what could qualify as a continuant through several incarnations. Here then, we face some important interpretative options. In the first instance, we could simply concede a gap in the theory, and say that Empedocles did not see the problem, and therefore did not undertake to show how such continuity would be possible. This is historically possible, but not particularly charitable towards Empedocles. More generous is the option of claiming that he did see that the two stories cannot, in the end, be unified into a coherent whole, but that he nevertheless wanted to hold on to both, as a way of communicating a sort of psychological or ethical story (*The Purifications*) alongside the cosmic one.<sup>45</sup> In this respect, it remains undeniable that Empedocles at least attempts to relate the two accounts. The story of the fallen individual god parallels or maps onto the macrocosmic tale of the cosmos' own fluctuating fortunes. Even the end-point, a blessed state, seems quite comparable, if we take the lesser god of B 134 as somehow approximating the spherical perfection of the *Sphairos*. To be sure, the agent of this unity in both cases must be the same: Love.

I think that there is a still better option, and that a case can be made for a continuant of some kind, although a full attempt to unravel all of these links cannot be undertaken here. At most, let me offer a few considerations in favour of the general plausibility of a unified reading of Empedoclean theology. This will only involve, on the one hand, establishing the notional possibility of a long-lived but not immortal soul acting as continuant, and on the other, showing that a plurality of long-lived gods do figure in the world described in *The Physics*.

A first but non-decisive consideration is that, as I have been arguing, the group consisting of cosmic god plus plural lesser gods is characteristic of the whole period, so that it would be odd for Empedocles not to attempt giving them all a place in his system. More strongly, on the question of the continuant, there is a very strong parallel for the notion of a long-lived but not immortal soul in the *Phaedo* 87b–e. This is the analogy advanced by the 'Pythagorean' Cebes, a believer in reincarnation, but who remains sceptical of the possibility of complete immortality, a point which he illustrates by his image of the weaver (the soul) who outlasts his several cloaks (bodies), but is no

45 A. Laks, 'Some thoughts about Empedoclean cosmic and demonic cycles', in A. Pieris (ed.), *The Empedoclean Kosmos: Structure, Process and the Question of Cyclicity*, vol. III (Patras: Institute for Philosophical Research, 2005), pp. 265–82.

more immortal for all that. It may well be that Plato has Empedocles in mind here, but even if not, the view suffices to show that such a concept was not unimaginable or unheard of.

As for the existence of the gods in our current world, this should be the least controversial aspect of the question. The best evidence occurs in a recurring poetic formula used by Empedocles to describe the emergence of 'all things' from the interaction of the first principles of his system. Fragment B 21, which Simplicius identifies as from *The Physics*, provides one instance of it. In lines B 21.1–6, Empedocles identifies the elements by pointing them out as the predominant component in the four visible world-bodies, and then says, at 21.7–12:

and in Grudge all are found distinct and apart  
but in Love they come together, and desire one another.  
For from these all that ever was, is and will be  
are sprung: both trees and men and women  
and beasts and birds and fishes water-reared  
including *gods of long span*, mightiest in honours.<sup>46</sup>

Who then are these gods of long span? The natural and obvious reading is that they are the 'lesser gods' of the philosophical tradition, the gods of Homer, simply now transposed into the closed world of the elements in cyclical alternation.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps, on a generous interpretation, we could also include the *Sphairos* (but it alone, which would be in the singular, or various iterations of it, which would hardly count as plural, seems out of the question). Some also suggest that the elements are meant.<sup>48</sup> While recognizing that they too can be called gods, this simply cannot be the case here, because the whole burden of the passage is to highlight the difference between the elements themselves and the *products* of elemental interaction ('*from these . . .*'), all of which are compounds of some kind. The elements do not 'produce' elements.

For lack of any other candidates, then, the more obvious meaning of the passage cannot be seriously doubted, and we must take it that *The Physics* included long-lived gods as regular members of the current world's fauna. If we add to it the conceivability of the notion

46 The frequency of the formula's use has resulted in numerous textual variants, which are just as likely to be original, so that earlier attempts to harmonize all readings were misguided. For a list of variants, see Vitek, *Empedoklés*, p. 325 n. 20.

47 A good discussion is M. R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments, Edited with Introduction, Commentary, Concordance and New Bibliography* (Cambridge and Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), pp. 57–76.

48 For example, Primavesi, 'Physical and mythical divinity', pp. 256–7.

of a continuant through reincarnation, it looks as if Empedoclean theology is trying to offer a fuller version of the Heraclitean system, integrating some Pythagorean lore along the way. The key difference is that in Empedocles the great god and the lesser ones belong to separate stages of the cycle, although the two classes are otherwise related by analogy, as pointed out above, or as microcosmic and macrocosmic versions of the same phenomenon. To say this, of course, is not to claim that we know what will happen to these gods when Love reconstitutes the *Sphairos* (will they rush to cast themselves into the *Sphairos* like the Empedocles of later literary legend, the one who threw himself into Etna's flames?), but the matter cannot be investigated any further here.

Between Anaxagoras and Empedocles, then, we have a remarkable contrast between a theology so minimal as to raise doubts as to its existence, and one so rich that it hardly leaves room for anything outside it. As noted in the introduction to this section, their conception of divinity is also heavily influenced by their views on the nature of mind. In Anaxagoras, the separateness of Mind from matter gives it autonomy and control, whereas Empedocles' view of thought as dependent upon matter and material composition produces a much more restricted conception of the divine, limited in time by the cosmic cycle and in power by its elemental roots.

### LEUCIPPUS AND DEMOCRITUS ON GOD AND THE GODS

The atomic theory of Leucippus (fl. post-440? BC) and Democritus (460–? BC) represents a watershed in the history of Greek thought in general, but particularly so with respect to the gods. The basic components of the system are atoms, unbreakable, minute particles in all manner of shapes, and infinite void, with no beginning or end in time.<sup>49</sup> Since atoms obviously do not think, for the first time we have a philosophical system in which thinking is an emergent phenomenon, not a fundamental element of the system. The implications of this move are far-reaching, but before crowning the atomists the creators of secularism, it needs to be stressed that the motivations of the system were in the first instance cosmological and explanatory, and only incidentally secularist. Its foundations lie rather in an attempt to reply to the Eleatic challenge, perhaps in its later version as developed by Melissos.

While Leucippus was the author of the theory, its theoretical base was consolidated if not refounded by Democritus, who expanded its

49 For a recent full account, including bibliography, see C. C. W. Taylor, *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999).

application to a much great number of questions, although it remains open to debate whether we should understand *all* of his investigations as intended to hold together as part of one comprehensive system.<sup>50</sup> In addition to the usual difficulties of reconstructing the thought of such early authors, the later adoption of atomism by Epicurus, with a different agenda, much more focused on ethics and religion, renders the attribution of specific early atomist doctrines that much more complicated, especially those concerning the gods. Although the evidence is slight, we can nevertheless find some grounds for distinguishing between their views on a possible cosmic god, whom both atomists reject, and the lesser gods of tradition, which Democritus at least *appears* to accept or at least explain, albeit in a naturalized form compatible with atomism.<sup>51</sup>

Before turning to the gods, however, there is another key factor about the atomist world-view which needs filling in, one which differentiates them from the run of their predecessors as much as if not more than atomic theory itself: the infinite universe, containing infinite worlds.<sup>52</sup> Here is the summary as it appears in Hippolytus, a Christian writer of the late second or early third century AD:

There are infinite worlds and they differ in size. In some there is no sun or moon, in some they [the sun and moon] are greater than ours and in others lesser. The distances between worlds are also uneven, with more in one area, fewer in others. Some of them are growing, others at their peak, others dying; here they come to be,

50 A good brief survey of this issue is in J. Warren, 'Democritus on social and psychological harm', in A. Brancacci and P. M. Morel (eds), *Democritus: Science, the Arts and the Care of the Soul* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 87–104 at 87–90.

51 In discussing cosmology and views on whether or not the cosmos is alive, I speak of the atomists, i.e. Leucippus and Democritus together, but in discussing the evidence concerning the gods, plural, I will only mention Democritus, since this is how our evidence divides the attribution of these views. On the lack of evidence for a systematic clash between religious and secular viewpoints, see Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics*, p. 134. For an attempt to distinguish Leucippus' atomism from Democritus, D. W. Graham, 'Leucippus' atomism', in Curd and Graham, *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, pp. 333–52. On Democritean theology, see Taylor, *The Atomists*, pp. 211–16.

52 While our evidence allows for the possibility that a multiple- or infinite-worlds doctrine may have been advanced by Anaximander and Anaxagoras before them, this is more likely to be a misunderstanding in our sources, so that we should consider the atomists to be the first advocates of an infinite-worlds doctrine. The evidence for the Milesians is considered in Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, pp. 162–6. See also D. J. Furley, *The Greek Cosmologists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 139. On the evidence in Anaxagoras, B 4a, see Curd, *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae*, pp. 212–20, who reviews recent interpretations and opts for multiple (but not infinite) worlds.

in other places they fail. They are destroyed by colliding with one another. Some worlds are barren of plants and animals or any water. (DK 68 A 40, Hippolytus I .13)

This background needs to be kept in mind in the discussion of the formation of our own world, and the possible role for gods within it. Leucippus, the founder of the system, undertook in his *Mega Diakosmos* to describe the origins of *our* cosmos solely in terms of the collisions of atoms (DK 67 A1 and A24). The point of the exercise must have been, minimally, to provide a plausible explanation for the origin and organization of the cosmos on the most economical terms available; that is to say, by invoking only atoms and void. In one sense, of course, this is not necessarily philosophically economical, because any specific explanation will need to invoke a certain set of atomic shapes and arrangements in order to account for any given outcome. But in doing this against the backdrop of the infinite universe, the atomists can devolve upon its infinite resources the task of assembling the proper set of ingredient atoms, in the right initial conditions, to produce a given possible cosmos by subsequent atomic collisions alone. Any given world is in this way the product of both chance and necessity. Chance resides in the assembly of a given set of initial ingredients, and necessity in the subsequent working out of their combination.

In this respect, to begin with the cosmic god, we can posit at least three grounds for the atomists' rejection of any cosmic god.<sup>53</sup> First, infinity itself, as opposed to 'finitist' conceptions of the universe, makes it difficult to conceive of the possibility of some kind of central control or unified development for the universe as a whole. Such a universe is simply lacking the definite contours or organic unity that this presupposes.

Second, considered from the bottom up, since atoms do not think, and thought itself is a product of atomic interaction rather than a basic element of the system (see below), the infinite universe is lacking a suitable candidate for such a role. The closest Democritus gets to offering such a candidate occurs in one enigmatic doxographic report

53 I say 'posit' because, although other evidence makes their rejection fairly uncontroversial, we are lacking any direct evidence for the arguments the atomists may have deployed on this front. But we do have evidence that Democritus 'attacked' Anaxagoras on this question, so that there is evidence at least for a critique: διασύρειν τε αὐτοῦ τὰ περὶ τῆς διακοσμήσεως καὶ τοῦ νοῦ, ἐχθρῶς ἔχοντα πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅτι δὴ μὴ προσήκατο αὐτόν, 'he *mocked* his account of the ordering of the world and of *nous*, being hostile to him because he [Anaxagoras] did not accept him [as a student]' (B 65, ad fin.).

which declares that according to Democritus, 'The divine is mind (*nous*) in fiery spherical atoms' (A 74, Aetius I. 7, 16). While this does seem to remind us of Heraclitus or Anaxagoras, as if spherical atoms were being called upon to play the role of fiery, cosmic thinking stuff, it is clear that they have no causal role to play in the formation of the world, like Anaxagorean *nous*, nor does the world itself behave like a living thing or have any thoughts of its own:

Leucippus and Democritus and Epicurus deny that the cosmos is alive (ἔμψυχος) or that it is providentially governed, but is governed instead by a certain non-rational nature, [and hold] that it consists of atoms. (DK 67 A 22)

Whatever Democritus meant by the identification of the divine seems rather to have to do with his psychology, where he identifies the soul with highly mobile, circular, fiery atoms. As atoms, these have always existed, and will continue to do so, but it seems equally clear that these only account for thought under requisite conditions, namely through their involvement with an animal body.<sup>54</sup>

This leads to the third point, which is that the infinite universe, on the whole (if that term even applies to it) lacks universal organization, obviating any need to account for it. Unlike Anaxagoras, where all matter, starting from an initial, disorganized state, has to become organized into a structured, inhabitable world, the atomists never claim more than the fortuitous local organization of a tiny fraction of all available matter. While, for a finite universe, the organization of all or even most available material is bound to seem so vanishingly improbable as to require an intelligent agent responsible for this organization, and perhaps for the maintenance of its order, in the infinite universe, all that is required is enough local coincidence for a temporary world (cf. above) to emerge. And once again, the infinity of the universe itself will be enough to guarantee the possibility of such a local coincidence. This last point, I should stress, may be a little over-specific in its formulation, because it may not be accurate to brand all previous thinkers as default 'finitists'. But even so, the atomists may still be said to have at least refined an important theoretical distinction, not previously so sharp, between our finite cosmos and the infinity of other worlds found in the infinite universe, which they

<sup>54</sup> On this aspect, see P. M. Morel, *Démocrite et la recherche des causes* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1996), pp. 129–76; a more concise version in C. C. W. Taylor, 'Democritus and Lucretius on death and dying', in Brancacci and Morel, *Democritus: Science, the Arts, pp. 77–86 at 77–82.*[here]

could then exploit to deny the need for divine ‘creationism’ of our cosmos.<sup>55</sup>

What then of the lesser gods? Here it is notable that unlike their rejection of the cosmic god, Democritus’ account of the gods, plural, seems so conciliatory to popular views, including even anthropomorphic gods, that it is difficult not to suspect that it was meant primarily as a means of explaining or accounting for religious beliefs, rather than an essay in positive theology. In all our sources, at any rate, Democritus never describes the gods as substantial physical presences, but access to them is always by means of mental representations. I cite the two most relevant testimonia:

To me at any rate, even Democritus, a great man and from whose springs Epicurus watered his own garden, seems to be nodding off on the topic of the nature of the gods. At one point he thinks there are images endowed with divinity about in the universe, at another he says that the gods are the principles of mind in the same universe, then that there are living (? *animantes*) images which are wont to be either harmful or helpful to us, then again that there are certain enormous images, of such gigantic size as to embrace the whole world. All of these seem worthier of Democritus’ home-town than of Democritus himself.<sup>56</sup> (DK 68 A 74; Cicero, *De natura deorum* I.43.120)

Democritus says that certain *eidola* [a technical term for thin films of atoms] come upon people, and that some of them are beneficial and others harmful. Hence he prayed to happen upon propitious *eidola*. These are big or even larger than life and difficult to destroy, but not indestructible, and they indicate the future to people by appearing to them and emitting voices. It is from this that the ancients, forming an impression from these

55 Certainly Heraclitus, Parmenides and Empedocles before them appear to be ‘finitists’ in this regard, and to think that the cosmos or what-is is identical with ‘the all’. All three also seem to think that in some sense it can be grasped as a totality, if only perhaps by some deity. The case for attributing this default ‘finitist’ assumption to Anaximander and Anaxagoras is more complicated, and Xenophanes may not fit into either side of such a division. Within the atomist infinite universe, by contrast, there is a near-inexhaustible play of local possibilities. The atomists saw no reason to exclude any possible realization, no matter how long the odds, provided it were possible, i.e. compatible with atomism, including parallel worlds; see Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics*, pp. 137–9, who quotes the key evidence for this latter claim in Cicero, *Academica* II 55.

56 I render *nutare* by ‘nodding off’, not ‘hesitate’, ‘vacillate’ (*OLD*), as a Latin rendering of νυστάζειν.



things (τούτων αὐτῶν φαντασίαν λαβόντες) conjectured that there is a god, although there is no god beyond these, endowed with an immortal nature. (DK 68 B 168; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* IX.42)

As stated above, Democritus seems to attempt to account for the gods primarily as a psychological phenomenon, in the sense in which we can apply such a term to an atomist. As in his psychology more generally, mental representations are produced by the interactions of the most subtle atoms, small spherical ones, distributed throughout the body, and perhaps concentrated in the chest or head (or perhaps neither, if that is a later updating of the theory). The second text gives the clearest picture of how this works, when it describes how *eidola* ‘come upon people’. The mechanism must be comparable to Democritus’ account of vision, which occurs when *eidola*, which are constantly being emitted from the surface of any large aggregate of atoms, reach the eye.<sup>57</sup> The *eidola* in this case, however, appear to be of a still more subtle type, such that they do not affect the sense organs but travel into the body and impinge directly upon the spherical soul-atoms of the individual. Whether this happens all the time or only under certain circumstances is not stated explicitly in our two passages, but DK A 77, not quoted above, suggests that the same mechanism accounts for dreams, so there may be moments when we are more receptive to such *eidola* than others, with sleep an important instance.

However that may be, Democritus can in all cases vindicate the psychological experience of divinity by ascribing it to a physical occurrence; that is, the emission of *eidola*. And as we know from another source, DK A 78, the atmosphere is full of them at all times, for they are constantly being emitted by all bodies.

With respect to the plural gods, the question which naturally follows from this is to ask: what are these images images of? On the analogy with vision, we would expect them to have been generated by the very gods they represent. One could conjecture as much, as a sort of Epicurean theology before the letter, with remote gods inhabiting the cosmic *intermundia*, or perhaps the upper atmosphere, but the first text seems to insist that these images are not images of something else, but are *themselves* alive (*animantes*). The second text adds ‘very difficult

57 This is a very simplified account, and I cannot discuss the full evidence, including the debate on the function of air as a medium. See now Taylor, *The Atomists*, pp. 200–11; J. Salem, ‘Perception et connaissance chez Démocrite’, in Brancacci and Morel, *Democritus: Science, the Arts*, pp. 125–42; see also for the relation between vision-*eidola* and their more subtle mental counterparts Morel, *Démocrite*, pp. 177–245.

to destroy, but not indestructible'. If we add to that their ability to appear before us and speak, indicate the future, prove harmful or beneficial, then it is tempting to take the *eidola* themselves to be living creatures of some kind, perhaps made up of a high concentration of fiery, spherical soul-atoms.<sup>58</sup> The second text, moreover, insists upon there being no actual divinity beyond the *eidola*.

But against this line of thought, we are still left to wonder why Democritus would insist upon calling them *eidola* in the first instance, and not simply gods, however constituted, if he meant to recognize them as fully real in any way sympathetic to traditional views. In either case, it makes better sense, I think, to interpret the *eidola* in question as somehow primary themselves, and not *eidola* of something else. This then leaves two options for interpreters: either the *eidola* in question are themselves alive, or they only seem so.

The evidence is underdetermined, but I think that the emphasis on the gods as primarily a psychological experience, and not as substantive presences in the world, tends to a denial of their status as actual living creatures or agents of a more robustly physical kind. But if the *eidola* themselves are not alive, then two factors must still be explained: on the one hand, their ability to *seem* alive, that is, to speak, prove harmful or beneficial, and on the other, their origin.

To account for the first factor, it may be useful, following others, to consider Democritus' explanation of the evil eye (DK A 77; Plutarch, *Quaest. Conv.* V.7.6, 682F-683B2).<sup>59</sup> In that case, Democritus suggested that one could provide a causal account of such transmissible ill-will by positing the emission of *eidola* which preserved a psychic imprint from the sender. These images could thus convey the hate and resentment of their sender, images which would prove troubling and upsetting for the recipients of such subliminal, atomic hate-mail. More pertinently, in DK A 77 (Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 8.10.2), the language used to describe the *eidola* declares that they behave *as if* alive, including the appearance of speech and bodily motion. Accordingly, it would seem that Democritean *eidola* can provide the appearance of motion. As is attested in the later Epicurean version of the theory, the constant emission of *eidola* might be comparable in its effect to a cinematic experience, rather than a single 'snap-shot' image. But even if that explanation is anachronistic and does not apply to the Democritean account, it seems to be the case that Democritus thought

<sup>58</sup> So Taylor, *The Atomists*, p. 214.

<sup>59</sup> In this case see Warren, 'Democritus on social and psychological harm', pp. 96–99, who cites G. Vlastos, 'Ethics and physics in Democritus', *Philosophical Review* 54 (1945), pp. 578–92, and 55 (1946), pp. 53–64, repr. in Graham, *G. Vlastos: Studies in Greek Philosophy. I*, pp. 328–350 at 331 n. 24.

that, somehow or other, the *eidola* were able to convey the impression of motion and life. So it would seem that there is no need to posit living images, and perhaps we should take Cicero's term *animantes* as his rendering of 'moving' in his Greek source.

As for their origin, we have even less evidence to go on, although perhaps the first text can provide some clues. While the hostile nature of the first text tries to play against each other various aspects of Democritus' account of the gods, in doing so it actually gives us a broader, if more superficial, account of his views. The different aspects which the text highlights, with a view to drawing out their incongruence, in fact tends to show that all of the different manifestations associated with the divine are somehow built upon different instantiations of fiery, spherical atoms. In this regard, as pointed out above, the soul-atoms are comparable to Anaxagorean *nous*-stuff, or Heraclitean fire, or again, intelligent air or aether, in that they are the finest, most subtle bodies in the cosmic system, responsible for thought, if no longer for cosmic order. In this way they are deserving of the epithet 'divine', and it presents no real difficulty if Democritus also claims that they are the 'principles of mind' and the component elements for a more subtle type of *eidola*, that is, those *eidola* 'endowed with divinity' and which seem to move or be alive. (This may also be the explanation for their being 'difficult to destroy': they may be so subtle as to pass through most bodies with few collisions to dissipate them.) Their common nature with celestial fire is given explicitly in a testimonium from Tertullian: 'Democritus conjectures (*suspiciatur*) that the gods are born with the rest of the heavenly fire' (DK A 74, *Ad nat.* II). That is, both were first separated off from the other types of atom in the original cosmic whirl.

The notion that the stuff of thought and life is the same as the heavenly fire has a predecessor in Heraclitus, of course, and parallels in other contemporary thinkers, for instance Diogenes of Apollonia's intelligent air. Here, the theory merely gives the identity criterion of the two: the specific spherical atomic shape. In this respect, had Democritus wanted, it seems as though he had to hand the ingredients for a world-soul or cosmic god, if not a very powerful one, but as seen above, he denied the possibility.

We have no evidence for his reasoning on this point, but we can at least suggest that, on the analogy of his account of thought in humans and animals, a body is needed to concentrate the spherical atoms, perhaps through breathing, to the requisite density needed for animal and human thought. Since this condition is not met in the upper atmosphere, there is no cosmic thinker. But this concentration of finer particles, if not enough to produce thought, may have been enough

to produce, by random collisions, or natural processes of some other kind, the numerous subtle *eidola* which men imagine to be gods. (Is the mention in Cicero of an image 'of such gigantic size as to embrace the whole world' a distortion of this point, conflating the celestial reservoir of spherical atoms with its products?) Once again, these *eidola* are said to be long-lasting, which could perhaps be used to distinguish them from terrestrial *eidola*, but the evidence does not allow us more than guesses.

While granting that such a line of thought is highly speculative, it seems nevertheless to offer one possible interpretation for the single theological fragment we have of Democritus, B 30, in which he describes an early but not primeval stage of religious belief, following an initial stage of religious awe and fascination before celestial phenomena.<sup>60</sup> At this later stage, he writes, 'certain wise men, raising their hands towards what we Greek call the air, said: "Zeus declares all things, and knows all things and gives and takes away all things, and he is king of all".' For Democritus, this declaration is, as it were, on the right track, for its makers correctly identify in the air and heavens the real divine substance, that is, the celestial reservoir of soul-atoms, perhaps even mistakenly seeing in this agglomeration a gigantic fellow mind. But because at this stage men have not yet learned to recognize the same stuff in themselves, they are still ignorant of the true nature of the gods, which can only be found by cultivating one's own set of spherical atoms. As Democritus puts it at B 37: 'He who chooses the goods of the soul chooses the more divine, he who chooses those of the body, the more human'. Or more plainly still: 'The divine is mind (*nous*) in fiery spherical atoms' (A 74).

This final usage still preserves a place for the divine in the world, so that Democritus is not strictly a 'lesser-gods' atheist, but it presents such a limited conception of the divine, as a contingent event in the world, that the word in his case amounts to little more than an assertion of human value.

## CONCLUSION

Belief in the gods, cosmic and unique, or lesser and plural, hardly ended with Democritus. Still, ancient atomism is a good place to stop, because the system provides us with a first, complete enough, physical

<sup>60</sup> See T. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology* (Chapel Hill: Press of Western Reserve University, 1967; repr. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 202–5, for earlier discussion and bibliography, and Taylor, *The Atomists*, pp. 211–16, for more recent work.

argument against the gods, one which we can recognize as still with us. If Democritus himself did not openly reject the gods, he certainly was the first with the tools for the job. About seventy or so years later, when Plato targets certain atheists in *Laws* 10.888a, if those he charges with rejection of the gods are not the original atomists ('O my son . . . you and your friends are not the first who have held this opinion about the gods'), then whichever persons are the target had certainly read their Democritus.

This outlook is what Plato undertook to counter, by putting mind and intelligent design back above nature, thereby submitting it to the scrutiny of teleology, and rescuing the divine through 'supernatural' metaphysics. However we may feel about it, Plato's approach was far and away more influential than the atomic alternative.<sup>61</sup> When it came to the gods, by far the predominant norm of philosophical departure in the ancient world was not atheism, atomic or other, but rather a reformist strain, in which received ideas about the gods were challenged in the name of a higher, rationalized or purified conception of religion and the divine. More significant still, the phenomenon of rational criticism of popular religion, in any guise, was always limited to a minority of the philosophically inclined, and never threatened the continued existence of ritual practices, down to the end of paganism. That stands in contrast to the many more numerous cases of – often mutual – accusations of 'godlessness' made by later opponents who had different views on the divine. Living without gods in the ancient world was far more radical and demanding than it is for us.

61 For a synoptic yet highly informed survey of the whole debate via the question of creation, see now Sedley, *Creationism and its Critics*.

## GODS IN EARLY GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

*Robert L. Fowler*

This chapter seeks to understand something of Herodotus' attitude towards the gods, both by examining his text for internal indications and by comparing the practice of other early writers. There have been, to be sure, many excellent studies of Herodotus' gods, and his religion.<sup>1</sup> In general one may study Herodotus' text either to discover evidence of religious practice and belief, or to assess the role of the gods in the *Histories* themselves. The second of these is the primary focus here, but more than the usual point that the gods are deeply implicated in the course of history, in various interesting ways, I wish to stress that they are also deeply implicated in the historiography, and linked to Herodotus' most basic conception of his task.

Herodotus, after all, did not have to work the gods into his

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- 1 Most recently S. Scullion, 'Herodotus and Greek religion', in C. Dewald and J. Marincola (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 192–208. See also G. Lachenaud, *Mythologies, religion et philosophie de l'histoire dans Hérodote* (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1978); H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (London and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983<sup>2</sup>), pp. 58–70; J. Gould, *Herodotus* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989); W. Burkert, 'Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen', in G. Nenci and O. Reverdin (eds), *Hérodote et les peuples non grecs: entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* 35 (Vandoeuvres and Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1990), pp. 1–39; J. Gould, 'Herodotus and religion', in S. Hornblower (ed.), *Greek Historiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 91–106 = *Myth, Ritual, Memory, and Exchange: Essays in Greek Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 359–77; T. Harrison, *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); N. Fisher, 'Popular morality in Herodotus', in E. Bakker et al. (eds), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 199–224; J. Mikalson, 'Religion in Herodotus', in Bakker et al., *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, pp. 187–98; T. Harrison, "'Prophecy in reverse"? Herodotus and the origins of history', in P. Derow and R. Parker (eds), *Herodotus and his World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 237–55; J. Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

explanation of historical events. Living not much later, Thucydides excluded them; in the next generation the pious Xenophon put them back in.<sup>2</sup> Ctesias cheerfully gives Semiramis the divine mother and fabulous biography Herodotus had passed over in silence.<sup>3</sup> These differences show that we are dealing with individual preference, not (as it was once popular to suppose) evolution from superstition to reason, from *mythos* to *logos*.<sup>4</sup> In Herodotus' own day Sophists were busy finding anthropocentric ways of explaining the world. Herodotus could have told a secular story, but he did not. Religion is everywhere in his book; no one would write such a thing were they not, at the least, profoundly interested in the gods and their role in human history. In this light the idea that he is a religious sceptic of some kind seems very hard to sustain. Though he expresses many reservations concerning various human beliefs about the gods, this is quite different from scepticism about their basic existence. Any number of passages demonstrate his belief in divinity; none suggests disbelief.<sup>5</sup>

2 Thucydides: S. Hornblower, 'The religious dimension of the Peloponnesian War, or, what Thucydides does not tell us', *HSCPh* 94 (1992), pp. 169–97; W. Furlley, 'Thucydides and religion', in A. Rengakos and A. Tsakmakis (eds), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 415–38. Xenophon: H. Bowden, 'Xenophon and the scientific study of religion', in C. Tuplin (ed.), *Xenophon and his World* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2004), pp. 229–46; R. Parker, 'One man's piety: the religious dimension of the *Anabasis*', in R. Lane Fox (ed.), *The Long March: Xenophon and the Ten Thousand* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 131–53. See also Hornblower's brief remarks in *Greek Historiography*, p. 30.

3 F 1b–c Lenfant; cf. F 1m. On Herodotus' scepticism about divine parentage see below, p. 326.

4 An example among many: H. Strasburger, 'Herodot als Geschichtsforscher', in *Studien zur alten Geschichte* 2 (Hildesheim and New York: Olms, [1980] 1982), pp. 835–919 at 887: 'So nahe er Thukydides zeitlich und in vielen wesentlichen Zügen der Äußerungstechnik steht – in gedanklicher Hinsicht geht die Trennungslinie zwischen archaisch und klassisch, der von uns abgewendeten und der uns zugekehrten Denkwelt, gerade zwischen ihnen Beiden durch. Für Herodot sind die meisten geschichtlichen Erscheinungen Kundgebungen eines göttlichen Willens, Äußerungen, die ihm geheimnisvoll und unheilsschwanger erscheinen, mindestens, solange noch nicht das Ende einer bestimmten Schicksalskette sichtbar scheint.'

5 Gould, 'Herodotus and religion'; Harrison, *Divinity and History*, pp. 13–14; Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus*, p. 64; contrast D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 196–205. Scullion, 'Herodotus and Greek religion', and Burkert, 'Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen', oddly mistake Herodotus' reluctance to speak of theology for scepticism about the existence of gods; though he was influenced by the tradition of Xenophanes and Protagoras (below, p. 332), when the latter says 'Concerning the gods I am unable to know that they exist, or that they do not exist, or what they are like in appearance' (tr. Scullion, p. 201), Herodotus obviously disagrees with the first part of this. Cf. V. Gray, 'Herodotus' literary and historical method: Arion's story (1.23–24)', *AJPh* 122 (2001), pp. 11–28 at p. 21.

There are, however, many ways of including gods in a story. The point is perhaps most easily demonstrated by quoting two passages, not from Greek writers, but from the Bible.<sup>6</sup> The first passage is chosen more or less at random from the Old Testament (1 Samuel 16.1–4, King James Version):

And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.

And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem.

The second is from Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 15:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, and how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve;

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

<sup>6</sup> The contrast is merely meant to focus attention on Greek characteristics; for orientation on Biblical historiography (and what that term might mean in context), see A. Momigliano, 'Persian historiography, Greek historiography, and Jewish historiography', in *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 5–28; T. Bolin, 'History, historiography, and the use of the past in the Hebrew Bible', in C. Kraus (ed.), *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 133–40. For Persian historiography see H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'The Persian kings and history', in Kraus, *The Limits of Historiography*, pp. 91–112.



And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am.

The first passage has many parallels in the historical books of the Old Testament. God appears on almost every page; either he speaks directly with the principal characters and directs their actions, or they speak confidently on his behalf. The entire history is the enactment of his plan for the Israelites to reach the Promised Land; he has made a covenant with them, which he cannot break, though they do so repeatedly.

The second passage also provides a narrative, the last days and resurrection of Christ, as the foundation of history, the end of which is, as in the first passage, the establishment of a Kingdom. The divine plan underpinning this is guaranteed by scriptures. It is further guaranteed by the repeated epiphany of the risen Christ, attested by many living witnesses. The implication for the individual in both passages is the same: keep the faith; follow the Lord.

Much of what we find in these passages is alien to mainstream Greek religion as conducted in the city-states or represented in the great works of literature. There is no master plan, no call to 'follow me' as one does Moses or Jesus. There is a sense of a contractual relationship with the gods, but nothing like the Old Testament covenant. There are no scriptures, no Word of God. There is no end of history. The gods do not make the fate of humanity, collectively or individually, their central concern.

These differences are clear. There is, however, a point of contact in one respect: in some genres of Greek literature, the gods do converse directly with humans: epic and tragedy come immediately to mind, but lyric too affords examples, whether in Sappho's intimate songs (fr. 1), or Pindar's more public ones (*Pyth.* 8.59). In mythography too the gods are omnipresent in this direct manner.<sup>7</sup> But not in historiography – at least, not once Herodotus had set the pattern. Recall that the mythographers were historians; the distinction of myth and history lay in the future, even if it was starting to take shape in Herodotus' day, owing not least to his efforts but also to those of the Sophists. His prose forebears therefore gave no lead in this respect.<sup>8</sup> Herodotus

<sup>7</sup> For the gods in mythography, see below.

<sup>8</sup> For orientation on Herodotus and his relation with the mythographers, see R. Fowler, 'Herodotos and his contemporaries', *JHS* 116 (1996), pp. 62–87, and 'Herodotus' prose predecessors', in Dewald and Marincola, *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, pp. 29–45.

was clearly predisposed to think that gods are part of the story, as we shall see at a quite basic level – in one sense, he was not so far from the Bible after all; but something prevented him from telling his story as Homer, Aeschylus, Pherecydes, Pindar or the authors of the Bible told theirs, with gods on stage. Here again, personal predilections will have played a role; but given that Herodotus was, it seems, the first to make this choice, and given its profound consequences, we need to ask about the context in which he made it.

A general point about the nature of Greek gods is highly pertinent. The basic difficulty is that a Greek god cannot be the ultimate subject of the story. As denizens and not creators of the world, they must be part of some other, more basic story. Wilamowitz famously observed that in Greek religion ‘god’ is a predicate, not a subject.<sup>9</sup> In more modern Christian traditions, one learns as a child appropriate adjectives with which to describe the deity: God is love, God is merciful, God is just, God is all-knowing, God is all-powerful, and so on. In Greek religion, by contrast, when something notable happens – lightning strikes, significant words are spoken, your interlocutor changes into a bird and vanishes through the ceiling – one draws an inference: *that* (subject) was a god (predicate). The gods are in the world, and projections of it; they are not outside it, or authors of its being. Something more fundamental than they must provide the outlines of the story.

Greek religion therefore was inherently resistant to the kind of role the Bible gives God. But even as an ordinary pious Greek Herodotus need have done no more than note religious matters when pertinent to his tale, and perhaps draw inferences about divine punishment of sacrilege (a firm article of belief for all pious Greeks at all times). Herodotus wanted to do more than this. His whole enterprise, I suggest, was one of finding a way to turn Greek gods from predicates into subjects. I mean at the fundamental level of what makes history happen. In historiographical terms, this level must appear as what moderns would call the master narrative, the pattern or framework governing the particular story.<sup>10</sup> Herodotus’ master narrative is easily identified; it is the cycle of human fortune:

I will proceed with my history, telling the story as I go along of small cities of men no less than of great. For most of those which

9 U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1931), I, pp. 18–21; earlier at *Isyllos von Epidauros* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1886), p. 97 n. 0 and his note on Eur. *HF* 557.

10 On this common term (also ‘metanarrative’, ‘grand narrative’) see for instance M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 58–62.

were great once are small today; and those which used to be small were great in my own time. Knowing, therefore, that human prosperity never abides long in the same place, I shall pay attention to both alike. (1.5.3–4, tr. de Selincourt)

Though a cyclical view of history at the agency of the gods was traditional since Hesiod, it is of the greatest significance that Herodotus is not prepared simply to assume, in the manner of a Muse-inspired poet, that the gods play this role. Nothing would have been easier, but this was not doing history. In spite of his convictions about the role of gods in history, he has thought it necessary first to place them to one side. He is explicit about this, in fact: when at 2.3.2 (cf. 2.65.2) he declares his reluctance to speak about τὰ θεῖα τῶν ἀπηγνημάτων on the grounds that everyone has equal knowledge about the gods (equally much, and equally little), he means, as Burkert convincingly argued, what we would call myths;<sup>11</sup> among other things, the statement can be read as a repudiation of (what we call) mythography. Ultimately, however, he wants the gods in; but his strictures mean that he must first write them out, and present his views as a *conclusion*, the results of his *historiē*. In the Bible, the story can be inferred from God; in Herodotus, god must be inferred from the story.

It is the function of the Solon and Croesus episode to furnish this proof programmatically for the entire *Histories*, whose other great example of the pattern will be Xerxes. Croesus is mentioned immediately after the above passage, so is clearly uppermost in Herodotus' mind, though before he gets to Croesus he must first explain his antecedents.<sup>12</sup> The Croesus and Solon episode adds the divine dimension to the statement in the proem, which lacks it. That Herodotus is not passively reporting received material, but is shaping it with powerful intent, is clear from the location and extent of the tale. That he endorses the theological opinion placed in the mouth of Solon (1.32.1, 9) can hardly be doubted.<sup>13</sup>

On the *superficial* level, gods are of course everywhere in Herodotus. Their presence makes itself known through oracles, omens, miracles, dreams and so on. The two levels ultimately join up, and it will be

11 Burkert, 'Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen', p. 26.

12 On the sequence of the narrative here see M. Lloyd, 'Croesus' priority: Herodotus 1.5.3', *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 9.1 (January 1984), p. 11.

13 Similar sentiments are expressed by other characters at 3.40.2, 3.40.4, 7.10ε, 7.18.3, 7.46.4 (book 3 about Polykrates, book 7 about Persians vs. Greeks, not without irony). Croesus repeats the point at 1.207.1: ἐπεὶ με Ζεὺς ἔδωκε τοι . . . ἄνθρωπος καὶ σὺ εἷς . . . μάθε, ὥς κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπείων ἐστὶ πραγμάτων. Cf. Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*, pp. 50–1; S. Shapiro, 'Herodotus and Solon', *ClAnt* 15 (1996), pp. 348–64.

profitable to consider Herodotus' procedures. About oracles and such things, Herodotus like other Greeks can dispute the meaning; as Harrison and others have well argued, scepticism regarding this or that sign should not be generalized; in fact, such scepticism is a proof of belief in this kind of system.<sup>14</sup> Where Herodotus does become profoundly sceptical is when the gods are supposed to have walked on to the stage of history, and spoken directly to humans or directly determined the course of events in the Biblical manner. This is a straightforward way in which he has written the gods out of his history, and the move is significant.

Sometimes the expression of doubt is explicit. For instance, the ruse of the Peisistratids in dressing up a woman as Athena is ridiculed (1.60.3): gods do not work like that. Herodotus doubts that Bel enters his temple and takes his rest there (1.182). He reserves judgement on the story of Boreas and Orithyia (7.189.3). In connection with various improbable tales about Rhampsinitos, for instance that he played dice with Demeter, Herodotus passes his famous remark, believe it if you will: here as elsewhere he is merely reporting what he has heard (3.123.1). He prefers a rationalized story of the origin of the Scythians to the tale of Herakles and the supernatural snake-woman (4.11.1).

Mostly, however, the scepticism is implicit. Here the distinction between reported and direct speech is pertinent. It is, to be sure, a treacherous distinction.<sup>15</sup> It cannot be taken as read that a reported view (marked by 'it is said that' or 'the Corinthians say' and the like) implies that Herodotus does not believe the report. His famous remark in connection with the Argives' neutrality in the war, that he merely reports what he has heard and is not obliged to believe it, and that this applies to his whole work (7.152.3), does not prevent him from expressing firm opinions on many occasions on the reliability of reports. It is also true that the distinction itself is not always easy to draw. A long episode might be introduced by 'it is said that', but thereafter have no further reminder of its being a report; the longer it is, the more one hears Herodotus' own voice. Conversely an episode might be technically reported directly, but be so vividly focalized through the principal actors that it becomes their story as much as Herodotus'. But for all the difficulty attendant on this distinction we cannot simply ignore his striking programmatic statements at 3.123.1 and 7.152.3, and treat reported and direct speech as equivalent without further thought. His deployment of phrases such as 'the Corinthians say' – hundreds of times – is the most distinctive element of his voiceprint. It

<sup>14</sup> Harrison, *Divinity and History*, pp. 156–7.

<sup>15</sup> Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*, p. 145.

is his fundamental stance as an historian and his great contribution to historical methodology.<sup>16</sup> Nothing in Herodotus is straightforward or without exception, but this should not prevent us from trying to assess the phenomena.

In the present case, instances of direct vs. indirect intervention of divinity in history, there is a clear tendency. Omens, miracles, dreams and oracles are the main indirect forms. Although in all of these cases there is little or no doubt that a divinity is involved (*ex hypothesi* with oracles and miracles), they all involve the gods working through some other medium, and giving messages that require interpretation. If one compiles a list of all of these phenomena and notes whether they are reported in Herodotus' own voice or that of others, one finds numerous examples of both.<sup>17</sup> We conclude, partly aided by some explicit

16 Fowler, 'Herodotos and his contemporaries', pp. 80–6; N. Luraghi, 'Local knowledge in Herodotus' *Histories*', in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), ch. 7.

17 I forebear here to list all the dreams and oracles; for general discussion see Harrison, *Divinity and History*, ch. 5, and index s.v. 'dreams'; Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*, index s.vv. In what follows bold type indicates that Herodotus speaks in his own voice; it can be seen at a glance that the two types of enunciation are well represented, and inferences cannot be drawn as to the reporter's view of the matter unless he tells us. First, matters identified as portents by the word τέρατα: **1.59.1 cauldron spontaneously boils**; **1.78.1 snakes eating horses** (H. confirms Croesus' inference that it was a *teras*); **2.46.4 woman has intercourse with goat**; 2.82.2 Egyptians keep records of *terata* and are careful interpreters; **3.153.1 mule foals** (Zopyros infers that god is behind this – Babylon will fall; the incident is focalized through Z., but there is no λέγεται or the like); 4.28.3 Scythians regard a winter thunderstorm or an earthquake at any time as a *teras*; **6.98.1 the Delian earthquake**; **7.57.2 mare gives birth to hare** (Xerxes disregards though its meaning was plain, εὐσύμβλητον; H. also uses σημαίνειν of portents, for example 1.78.2: like dreams, they need interpretation) **and a mule gives birth to a hermaphrodite foal**; 8.27.4 Thessalians take the Phokeis (of the chalked faces) to be *ateras*; **8.37.2 sacred weapons found outside the temple of Delphi**; **8.37.2 even greater wonder, boulders falling, battle-cry from the temple of Athena Pronaia**; **8.137.3 loaf baked for Perdikkas always twice as big; wife infers it's a teras** (focalized through woman; whole story reported straight; note also the river swelling to prevent pursuit); 9.120.1 the portent of the dried fish on the fire. Secondly, other types of divine-human interaction (including portents or marvels not designated as τέρατα), excluding epiphanies: 1.31 Kleobis and Biton die in response to mother's prayer; 1.87.2 god puts out Croesus' pyre; **1.175 priestess growing beard warns of impending disaster**; 2.63.4 aetiological tale about Ares told by Egyptians; **2.111.2 Pheros impiously flings spear into Nile and goes blind; cured by advice of oracle**; 2.141 Sethos assisted by army of mice (told in dream that gods would come to his aid); 2.144.2 gods once ruled Egypt; Horus last to sit upon the throne; 2.156 Egyptian legend to account for the floating island; **2.181.4 Ladice prays to Aphrodite to cure her husband's impotence**; 3.86.2 lightning and thunder in clear sky confirm Darius as king (but 3.87, a different account); 4.15 Aristes vanishes; 4.85.1 the Symplegades; 4.191–5 various natural oddities in Libya; 6.82.2 flame shoots from breast of statue of Hera; 6.86δ gods punish Glaukos by wiping out his family; 7.10ε Artabanus on the envy of the god who destroys the mighty; **7.37 eclipse of**

statements, that Herodotus accepts the divine origin and validity of these forms of communication. Perhaps we may assume that he reserves judgement on the veracity of some of the reported examples.

With respect to direct intervention, the pattern changes. One may distinguish two types of such intervention, one on a micro-level and one on a macro-level. The micro-level, the level of everyday visible life, offers two forms of divine interaction. The first is that of corporeal epiphany.<sup>18</sup> These are without exception reported indirectly: 2.91.3, the frequent appearance of Perseus in Chemmis; 2.153 and 3.27, of Apis;<sup>19</sup> 4.179.2, of Triton to the Argonauts; 6.61.4, of Helen (or one we presume to be Helen) to Demaratos' mother; 6.69.1, of Astrabakos to Demaratos' mother as a double of Ariston; 6.105.1, of Pan to Pheidippides; 6.117, of the phantom to Epizelos at Marathon; 6.127.3, of the Dioskouroi to Euphorion; 8.38, of Phylako and Autonous to the Persians at Delphi; and 8.84.2, of the phantom woman at Salamis. This does not seem accidental.

The second type of intervention at micro-level is even more direct: when gods mate with humans. For this we do not need to rely on the distinction of reported and direct speech. Herodotus has serious reservations about these stories. His scorn of Hecataeus, who thought

(footnote 17 *continued*)

**the sun** (focalized through Xerxes); 7.129.4 the Peneus gorge made by Poseidon (H. endorses the Thessalian claim, on grounds that Poseidon causes earthquakes); 7.191.2 sceptical that Magi could quell the winds with sacrifice to Thetis and the nymphs; **8.13 'the god' was doing everything possible to equal the odds by sinking the Persian fleet at the Hollows**; 8.41.3 Athenians believe the goddess has abandoned the acropolis; **8.55 olive tree on the acropolis**; **9.61.3 Pausanias prays to Hera and sacrificial omens are instantly favourable**; 9.78.2 god gave Pausanias victory (part of a speech); **9.94 Euenios receives power of prophecy from god**.

18 These are discussed also by F. Graf, 'Trick or treat? On collective epiphanies in antiquity', in N. Marinatos (ed.), *Divine Epiphanies in the Ancient World* = *ICS* 29 (2004), pp. 111–30 at 115–18, who concludes that Herodotus suspends judgement rather than evinces general scepticism; see also Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1.

19 In his own voice at 2.153, but put together with 3.27ff it is a reported Egyptian belief, which H. of course respects. On the difference between epic and Herodotus on this point, see S. Hornblower, 'Epic and epiphanies: Herodotus and the "New Simonides"', in D. Boedeker and D. Sider (eds), *The New Simonides: Contexts of Praise and Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 135–47. To his point that the Pan epiphany is different because the Athenians established his cult (implying widespread belief in the event), the incident of Apis is one rejoinder; another is Griffiths' (*apud* Hornblower), that 'the word πιστεύσαντες implies that other views were possible' (p. 144); another is that the Athenians in Herodotus are capable of mass folly. For orientation on ancient epiphanies, see most recently J. N. Bremmer, 'Close encounters of the third kind: Heliodorus in the temple and Paul on the road to Damascus', in his *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 215–33, with bibliography at p. 217 n. 12; Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1.

his sixteenth ancestor was a god, is notorious (2.143). He is doubtful about Perseus' divine father (6.53.2), as he is about Targitaos' (4.5.1); he is consistent in naming only the human parents of Greek heroes in nine out of ten instances in the *Histories* (once he slips and refers to 'Perseus son of Zeus and Danae', 7.61.3).<sup>20</sup>

The tale of Hecataeus is told in the context of a conversation with Egyptian priests, for whom the time of the gods was very much older than sixteen generations ago. Herodotus accepts this chronology and concludes that the Greek dating of their gods is false. The implication is that the age of gods must be the same everywhere, and that when they left there was a qualitative change in human history; so while there may be no *spatium mythicum* there is clearly a *spatium divinum*, and it is well behind us. Moreover, Herodotus draws the conclusion that the gods did not walk with the heroes either. The reason must be that he regards them as much like us, if superior in attainments. Scholars who wish to deny the sense of a *spatium mythicum* to Herodotus make the point that, whatever one makes of Herodotus' strictures in his proem about what we can or cannot know about tales of Troy, they cannot belong to the *spatium mythicum* since he elsewhere treats the war as historical.<sup>21</sup> But if we draw the line between the two qualitatively different *spatia* not between us and the heroes, but between heroes and gods, the result is tolerably consistent. The gods did not intervene in the lives of heroes any more than they do in ours. We need to understand just how astonishing this conclusion is. It is completely at odds with every known predecessor, and requires a complete revision of traditional 'mythology'. One gains some sense of what Herodotus' mythography might have looked like from his treatment of Helen's story in book 2: not only rationalizing but also *historicizing*. One gains an idea too from the proem. The gods have been written out of the traditional story; the judgement of Paris is nowhere to seek. The move is revolutionary, and programmatic.<sup>22</sup> It marks the beginning of history, and therefore of historiography.

20 Harrison, *Divinity and History*, p. 89.

21 References in D. Boedeker, 'Epic heritage and mythical patterns in Herodotus', in Bakker et al., *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, pp. 97–116 at 110.

22 Thus I would go well beyond Harrison's somewhat neutral statement, *Divinity and History*, p. 33, that 'Quite simply, he felt no need in the Proem to mention the presence of gods.' Their omission is a deliberate and amazing step. See further below, n. 34. Herodotus' view on gods and heroes must be relevant to the 'so-called human generation' (3.122.2); but at the same time that passage throws up another difficulty, in that Minos, apparently on the other side of the line, elsewhere is treated as historical (1.171.2–3, 7.169–70, though in the first passage Herodotus stresses the events are at the remotest edge of historical reach, and in the second passage there is a λέγεται). Perhaps Herodotus is being mildly inconsistent; Minos is close to the

The meagre remains of earlier writing, whether about ‘mythical’ or more recent periods, do nothing to contradict this statement; on the contrary, such indications as there are tend to offer support.<sup>23</sup> No writer evinces embarrassment about interracial sex. τῇ Δανᾷ μίσγεται Ζεύς, ‘Zeus had intercourse with Danae’, says Hecataeus bluntly (fr. 21). There are of course scores of other examples of genealogies sprung from a god. There are endless examples of gods involved directly in the lives of heroes. Boreas rapes Orithyia in Acusilaus, to take an example that intersects with Herodotus (fr. 31). Apollo’s servitude to Admetos figures in several mythographers,<sup>24</sup> as does his and Poseidon’s to Laomedon – though it is interesting that in the two post-Herodotean authors in question, Hellanicus (fr. 26) and Metrodorus (fr. 2), the story is introduced by λέγεται and λέγουσι respectively. The Erinyes pursue Orestes as vigorously as they do in Aeschylus (Hell. fr. 169, Pher. fr. 135), Herakles draws his bow at Helios (Pher. fr. 18a), Athena blinds Tiresias (fr. 142), and so on. In one of the verbatim quotations of Pherecydes (105), in response to Pelias’ question to Jason, what would you do if an oracle said you would be killed by one of your citizens, Jason responds that he would send him to Aia to fetch the golden fleece; Pherecydes comments, ‘Hera put this notion in Jason’s mind so that destruction would befall Pelias in the person of Medea.’<sup>25</sup> Hera plants the idea directly into Jason’s mind; there is no dream, no oracle, no sign to be read. There is no parallel for this in Herodotus.<sup>26</sup>

It will not do to say that the mythographers know they were treating of myth, as that prompts the question, when did someone first perceive the difference; we would be looking for a Herodotus before Herodotus. There is no warrant for thinking that the mythographers thought they were doing anything but writing history. The observa-

(footnote 22 *continued*)

beginning, after all, and he and his brothers did end up as gods of the Underworld. Space precludes closer engagement with E. Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus: The Interaction of Myth and History* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), especially ch. 3 ‘The heroic age and chronology’; her diagnosis of heroes as midway between men and gods, so that the line is blurred, has its attractions but ultimately I think fails, even if heroes are treated as gods after death (not impossible even for men of Herodotus’ time). Her view that we are meant to think that the normal myth of the rape of Helen is operating in the background of the proem and represents Herodotus’ own view is a perverse critical result in so potent and significant a passage.

23 For Herodotus’ precursors see Fowler, ‘Herodotus’ prose predecessors’, p. 34. Mythographical fragments are quoted from R. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography* 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

24 Andron fr. 3, Acusilaus fr. 19, Pherecydes fr. 35, 131.

25 ταῦτα δὲ τῷ Ἰήσωνι Ἦρη ἐξ νόον βάλλει, ὥς ἔλθοι ἡ Μήδεια τῷ Περίηι κακόν.

26 The closest thing to it is the dream of Xerxes; see below.



tion that they were merely imitating the ways of epic, whose works they transposed to prose, strengthens the point: such criticism as they directed towards the inherited stories did not run along Herodotean lines, and remained within the same general thought-world as that of their exemplars.<sup>27</sup> There is a qualitative difference in what he was doing, a new kind of history, that within a hundred years was finally and explicitly differentiated from myth.<sup>28</sup>

The point is reinforced when we turn again to the macro-level of the *Histories*, the remote level at which gods directly determine the course of human events. The significant point is that it is closely related to the master narrative – the cycle of human events – indeed so closely related that it may be considered part of it. Seven times Herodotus comments emphatically in his own voice that god punishes crime and sacrilege.<sup>29</sup>

27 Hecataeus' rationalism, which in any case does not come close to the Herodotean revolution, is evidenced by three fragments (19, the number of Aegyptus' sons; 26, Geryon a human king in Ambrakia; 27, the hound of Hades); but he accepts without demur the miracle of a bitch giving birth to a stake (fr. 15) and reports Phrixos' talking ram, 'at the wish of Zeus' (though these words could in theory be the scholiast's).

28 It would take too much space to list every actual or implied instance of divine intervention in the mythographers; nearly every genealogy implies one, for a start. I give a brief, representative list to supplement the text above. Oracles figure in Aristoph. fr. 9B, Creoph. fr. 1, Hell. fr. 51, 125, 142, 163, Herodor. fr. 9, Pher. fr. 10, 64, 105. Gods appear to characters in dreams in Pher. fr. 148 (Athena to Theseus) and Xenom. fr. 1.21 (Phoebus to Ceyx). Gods effect metamorphoses in Aristoph. fr. 8, Hell. fr. 140, Menecr. fr. 2, Pher. fr. 38, 77 (agent not expressed), 124. Epiphanies are implied whenever a god has an active role in a story, for instance in the servitude of Apollo mentioned above, but waking visions employing the language of epiphany figure in Pher. fr. 10 (Zeus to Danae), Pher. fr. 11 (Hermes to Perseus), Pher. fr. 148 (Aphrodite to Ariadne, Dionysos to Ariadne). In addition to participating in many stories (and thus influencing events), gods plant ideas in human minds or otherwise direct events in Acus. fr. 22.78, Hec. fr. 17, Hell. fr. 1, 51, 160B, Pher. fr. 16, 17, 22, 41, 105, 133, 140 (to which add the epiphanies). The fragments of the mythographers dealing with historical periods are few. Oracles figure in Charon *FGrHist* 262 F 1, Antiochus 555 FF 10, 13. Charon 262 F 2 claims to have seen the cup Zeus gave to Alcmena; F 3 reports a prodigy attendant upon Xerxes' invasion; F 12 is the folktale of Rhoecus and the hamadryad. Xanthus of Lydia *FGrHist* 765 F 20 has a novel version of Niobe's petrification; gods figure in FF 13 and 29. We know next to nothing of Dionysius of Miletus, so cannot assess his attitude to the gods in history.

29 2.120.5, Greeks refused to believe Trojans about Helen τοῦ δαμνοῖου παρασκευάζοντος so that it would be clear that great offences bring great punishments from the gods; 4.205, verdict on Phereclides: excessive revenge is punished by the gods; 6.84.3, Kleomenes punished for what he did to Demaratos; 6.91, Aeginetans punished for sacrilege; 6.139.1, crime of Lemnian women punished by crop failure etc.; 7.134–7, anger of Talthybios falls upon the Spartans; 8.129.3, disaster befalls Persians at Pallene because of their sacrilege (so say the Potidaeans and H. agrees). In most of these cases Herodotus is drawing an inference about a longish sequence of events (a 'Schicksalskette' in Strasburger's term, above n. 4). Note also 9.65.2, where Herodotus infers that no Persian dead were found in the shrine of Demeter because of their earlier sacrilege at Eleusis. On the topic generally cf. Harrison, *Divinity and History*, ch. 4.

On two other occasions, this view is uttered by someone else – one is 6.86, the speech of Leotychidas and the parable of Glaukos, and the other is 8.106, the story of Hermotimos, both of which we are obviously meant to take seriously.<sup>30</sup> Herodotus thus leaves us in no doubt about this kind of divine intervention. But, as with the master narrative, the gods intervene from a lofty perch, and not by unambiguous visible action. Accordingly, inference and interpretation are once again required. There are times when it will not be certain: people had different views about Kleomenes, for instance, and though Herodotus is certain that the Spartans were punished by Talthybios for what they did to the Persian heralds, he thinks that the destruction of Athens might have been due to some other cause (7.133). Nevertheless, his frequent certainty in this kind of inference is notable. Though no Greek would doubt the principle that the gods punish sacrilege, Herodotus is very forceful on the point. Perhaps he is eager to secure agreement about his inferences on the firm ground of this indisputable principle, in order to predispose his audience to accept his inferences about the less firm ground of the master narrative. The two come together most prominently in the person of Xerxes.<sup>31</sup> About him, Herodotus' Greek audience would have had no illusions that he deserved what he got, and was as godless as his troops who burned the temples. Why then is this ground less firm, if the cycle of fortune is traditional wisdom too? I would suggest two reasons: first, because Herodotus conceives it as such; his understanding of the historian's task means that simple assertion, as in Aeschylus' *Persians*, is not open to him. Second, it is a crucial part of his text that the reckoning of sacrilege and injustice amongst Persians and Greeks is by no means one-sided, and that the cycle applies just as surely to Greeks, in particular to the Athenians. The episode with which the *Histories* closes, the treatment of Artayctes, is a sacrilege, and in the view of most critics a clear warning for the

30 The principle is affirmed in the narrative also by the Ethiopian Sabacus (2.139.2) and the oracle of Branchidae (1.159.4).

31 Scullion, 'Herodotus and Greek religion', pp. 194–5, insists on a distinction between technically sacrilegious offences and Xerxes' general arrogance; on p. 195 after discussing general expressions for 'the divine' (on which cf. below) he writes: 'There are thus two basic models: on the one hand sacrilegious behaviour inevitably punished by the relevant god, on the other superiority exposed to the caprice of chance and the counteraction of an abstract divinity. It is the latter model, better suited to uncertainty and complexity, that is relevant to the general significance of the Persian Wars.' Here we are in agreement; but to my mind, Scullion's discussion shows not that we should keep them apart, but that they are joined at the hip. We may be sure that Herodotus' audience regarded the whipping of the Hellespont as sacrilegious (Aesch. *Pers.* 745–51; in Herodotus' own narrative, Themistocles' view is eloquent: 8.109.3, cf. 8.143.2). On Xerxes see also Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*, pp. 44–7.

Athenians, like much else lying at the heart of the *Histories*.<sup>32</sup> That message will not have been received without demur, and required every persuasive device Herodotus could bring to bear.

In general, then, the gods interact with the events of history indirectly on the micro-level and directly – in the sense that they take charge of the course of events – on the remote macro-level. These two points go very well together; one can even say that they are constitutive of one another in Herodotean history. The macro-level must in general determine the micro-level; the difficulty is in determining the significant points of interaction. At the most crucial juncture of the *Histories*, Xerxes' decision to invade Greece, the gods do intervene to ensure his downfall, by means of a micro-level device: the famous dream. Herodotus turns this story into a set-piece illustrating precisely the difficulties of interpreting such things. He could have done it in the way that Pherecydes' Hera directed Jason (which is probably the form of the story as he received it), but he did not. He arrives at the same conclusion only by means of a complicated sequence of events that leave no doubt of Xerxes' equal responsibility for the decision. Coming the other way, from micro- to macro-level, one may say that the indications of divine activity confronting us in everyday life are presented by Herodotus as a stimulus to inquiry. They plainly point to something, but to what is anything but certain. Without the uncertainty and the remoteness, the answers would be easy. Dogmatism cannot by definition be *ιστορίη*. There must always be a dialectic between what can be known and what cannot be known for any kind of inquiry into causes to be possible. Some sense of inaccessibility and wonder must be built into the text.<sup>33</sup>

As the first historian's approach to his task, this goes well beyond the 'uncertainty principle' of traditional Greek religion.<sup>34</sup> What led

32 On Artayctes, see for example Harrison, *Divinity and History*, p. 121; on Athens, see for example R. Fowler, 'Herodotus and Athens', in Derow and Parker, *Herodotus and his World*, pp. 305–18; J. Moles, "'Saving" Greece from the "ignominy" of tyranny? The "famous" and "wonderful" speech of Socles (5.92)', in E. Irwin and E. Greenwood (eds), *Reading Herodotus: A Study of the Logoi in Book 5 of Herodotus' Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 245–68.

33 R. Munson, *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

34 Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*, p. 146, quoting Gould, 'Herodotus and religion', p. 94, on the uncertainty principle, comments 'it is what we would expect from a historian working carefully and thoughtfully'; in a similar vein Harrison, *Divinity and History*, p. 191, quoting Gould, *ibidem*: 'Herodotus' acknowledgements of the same necessary uncertainty are not based on specific "historiographical principle" but on the nature of Greek religion.' The point is, who first joined these up? For earlier critics, Herodotus' theological orientation seemed less complicated: see the essays by E. Meyer

Herodotus to adopt this stance? If Greek culture precluded a theocentric answer to his questions, why has he in the end written his gods into the macro-level anyway? If it did permit such answers, why did he not give them in the manner of an Aeschylus? The difference is the genre. To arrive at Herodotus' position, one must ask 'what is god?' and 'what is history?' at the same time. Those scholars are surely right who point to the influence of Ionic philosophy, particularly Xenophanes, whose inquiries tended precisely to take gods out of the micro-level of human experience; closer to his own day, one may detect a similarity also with the fundamental uncertainty of Protagoras about one's ability to know what god is.<sup>35</sup> But the conjunction of 'what is god?' with 'what is history?' appears to be Herodotus' doing alone.

It is a difficult position to be in, if one cannot readily construct a sentence beginning 'God is' in Greek. As I have attempted to argue, Herodotus' procedure is to construct a master narrative and equate that with the gods. If there is ambiguity in the 'and' of 'gods and history' – is it conjunctive or disjunctive? – Herodotus' instinct, encouraged by epic poetry and other traditions, is to think in conjunctive terms, but honesty compels him to arrive at that conclusion by way of a detour into disjunctive territory. The resulting picture has similarities to epic in respect of the 'double motivation' of action, in which on many occasions both divine and human agency seem to contribute to the course of events, working parallel to each other. But there are important differences from epic too. 'Parallel' is probably the wrong word even for epic, since it is not the case that one could switch from one plane to the other and tell the same story. The two planes have to be kept in play simultaneously to achieve the effect. One should probably think instead of a double helix. But in epic the move to the divine level is much easier, and the poet has direct access to the workings of Zeus' mind. The plan of the gods is every bit as efficacious in Herodotus, but he cannot access it in the same way. As stated several times already,

(footnote 34 *continued*)

('Weltanschauung'), H. Focke, and O. Regenbogen in W. Marg (ed.), *Herodot* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965), and note the lapidary comment of Wilamowitz, *Aristoteles und Athen* 2 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1893), p. 11: 'der Ionier, der den glauben der väter verloren hatte, hatte einen reineren glauben sich selbst erworben und den gott in der geschichte wiedergefunden'. H. Immerwahr, 'Historical action in Herodotus', *TAPhA* 85 (1954), pp. 16–45, attributes his own confusion to Herodotus.

- 35 A. Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, pp. 31–2; 'Historiography on written tradition and historiography on oral tradition', in *Studies in Historiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), pp. 211–20 at 211; Scullion, 'Herodotus and Greek religion', p. 200, with references (but see above n. 5).

he must infer it. But here is the final way in which the gods and history converge in Herodotus. Whether the object is divine or human agency, the process of assessment is the same. Herodotus is in either case the *histōr*, the investigator and judge.<sup>36</sup> His foregrounding of this process is his great contribution to historical methodology. Herodotus often represents his characters drawing inferences about divine intervention, a mirror of his own activity.<sup>37</sup> For instance, when Polykrates' ring is returned to him, he concludes in astonishment that the matter is divine (3.42.4). When Ariston hears the story of his double, he concludes the matter must be divine (6.69.3). When Herodotus reflects that the anger of Talthybios was vented upon the sons of the same ambassadors who went to Persia, he considers the matter must be divine (7.137.2). When he observes that the rumour of the victory at Plataia reached Mykale on the same day, he declares there are many proofs (τεκμήρια) by which one may conclude the matter is divine (9.100.2). There are several other examples, and interestingly in each case the word for 'divine' is the neuter θεῖον. One should not perhaps press this too hard, as it is a widespread Greek usage.<sup>38</sup> But it is highly marked in two programmatic places in Herodotus – once in the Solon *logos*, where the sage famously remarks that the θεῖον is envious and fond of havoc (1.32.1), and again in the *logos* of Xerxes' dream (7.16), where Artabanus discusses the conditions under which dreams might or might not be divine – and it is perhaps not fanciful to think that Herodotus used the abstract word because it better reflected his own thinking in terms of patterns rather than personalities.<sup>39</sup>

If Herodotus' master narrative is equated with the will of the gods, there is another interesting point of contact with, and difference from, epic. Critics have remarked that in the *Iliad* 'the will of Zeus' is identical with 'the plot of this epic'.<sup>40</sup> So far, so similar. But the difference is that Homer, with the authority of the Muses behind him, can simply

36 C. Dewald, 'Narrative surface and authorial voice in Herodotus' *Histories*', *Arethusa* 20 (1987), pp. 147–70.

37 A. Hollmann, 'The manipulation of signs in Herodotus' *Histories*', *TAPhA* 135 (2005), pp. 279–327.

38 Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus*, p. 64; Harrison, *Divinity and History*, pp. 179–80; Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*, pp. 131–3.

39 Cf. W. Pötscher, 'Götter und Gottheit bei Herodot', *Wiener Studien* 71 (1958), pp. 5–29 = *Hellas und Rom* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1988), pp. 3–27. For examples of anonymous divine intervention, see J. E. Powell, *A Lexicon to Herodotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938) s. vv. θεῖον, δαίμων, δαίμόνιον, θεός, δέω, θεοβλαβής; note also 6.27, where the subject of φιλέει must be a god. ἀνάγκη has a slightly special use in Herodotus: see R. Munson, 'Ananke in Herodotus', *JHS* 121 (2001), pp. 30–50.

40 Recently for example J. Wilson, 'Homer and the will of Zeus', *College Literature* 34 (2007), pp. 150–73.

state as fact in line 5 that the will of Zeus was fulfilled. Herodotus has to argue his case. He is his own Muse. His aspiration is to see things as they do; to attain the god's-eye view. In the end he achieves an even greater authority. It is after all through his narrative that the master narrative is established. He is author of both. In this construct everything clicks satisfyingly into place, right down to the extra three years allowed Croesus (1.91.3). All oracles and dreams have, in retrospect, proven true. It could not possibly be otherwise. If Herodotus began his investigations with the stance of an uncertain inquirer, for whom the narrative was still in the uncertain future, he finishes in the future perfect, in a position to tell us even the content of Polykrates' daughter's dream (3.124.1). Master narratives, after all, require master narrators.

## GODS IN APULIA

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If we are going to talk in anything but generalities about gods, we need to provide a clear focus on both the time and place under discussion. The more precise we can be about both, the more substance our comments can have. While the gods may be absolute, human perceptions of them are not. What follows here is a discussion of evidence for local perceptions of gods from the southeastern region of Italy usually called Apulia. The focus will be on the fourth century BC, particularly the first half of it, which was a creative period of transition for which we have a great deal of evidence.

Let me define the region more precisely, both geographically and culturally (Fig. 16.1). Apulia is the term used for the region of south Italy that stretches from the tip of the heel, up the east coast as far as the Gargano, and inland to the Bradano river. Taranto was the one Greek city in all of Apulia; the rest of that vast area was inhabited by Italic people who had been there for centuries before the arrival of the Greeks. By the eighth century BC three archeologically distinct local cultures can be recognized – the Messapians to the south, the Daunians to the north, and the Peucetians between them.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that Messapian was the language of all three groups – as opposed to Oscan, which was the language of the Samnites to the north and the Lucanians to the west.<sup>2</sup>

Surviving inscriptions from the Italic people of Apulia are sparse and provide little evidence for religious matters,<sup>3</sup> but inscriptions from Greek Taranto are also rare, and textual evidence for religious activities there is late. The richest body of evidence for perceptions of

1 E. de Juliis, *Gli Iapigi, storia e civiltà della Puglia preromana* (Milan: Longanesi, 1988), pp. 7–35, 40–52.

2 J. Penney, 'The languages of Italy', *CAH* IV<sup>2</sup>, pp. 720–38 at 737.

3 E. Hamp, 'Notes from autopsy of Messapic inscriptions', in S. Marchesini and P. Poccetti (eds), *Linguistica è storia: scritti in onore de Carlo de Simone* (Pisa: Giardini, 2003), pp. 115–20.

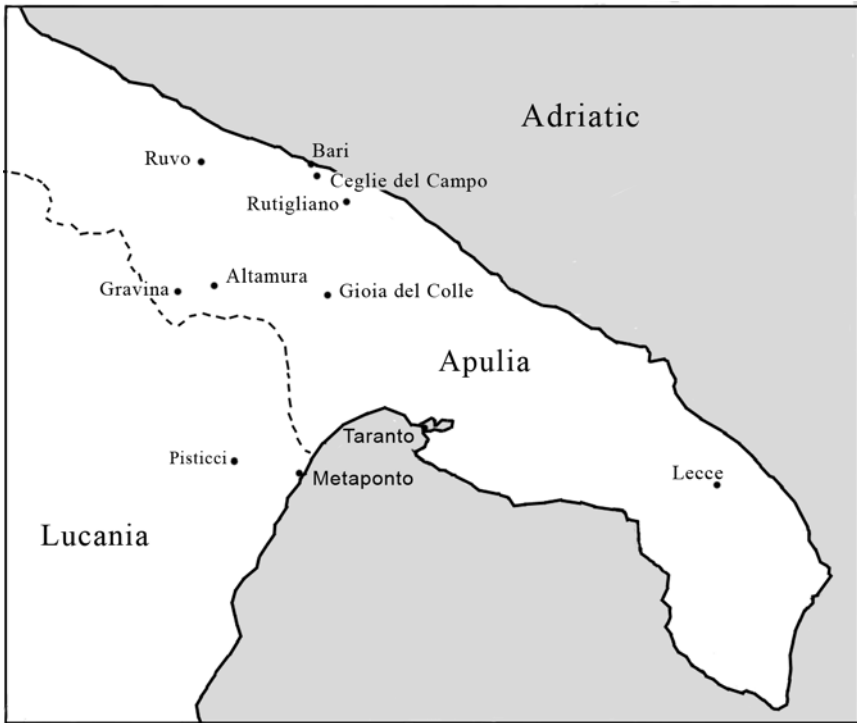


Figure 16.1 Map of Apulia.

the gods consists of figure-decorated pottery made in Apulia between about 430 and 300 BC.<sup>4</sup> These pots were rarely exported and most have been found within 100 km of the place of production. Relatively few of them come from Greek Taranto. Rather, the majority of those with a known provenance come from tombs of the non-Greek, Italic people in Apulia. The Italic custom of placing the body in the grave with the legs flexed (*rannicchiato*) – as opposed to the supine position used by the Greeks – makes the identification of their tombs unambiguous. There is reason to think that the painters and potters who produced the vases, whoever they were, were well aware of their Italic market. So, much of what follows here applies to the perception of the gods by the non-Greek people of Apulia, particularly the Peucetians.<sup>5</sup>

Apulian red-figure paintings are, in many ways, an extension of the

4 For catalogues that include the majority of known Apulian vases organized on the basis of the painters identified by style of painting, see A. D. Trendall and A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978–82) (hereafter *RVAp*) and supplements.

5 See T. H. Carpenter, 'The native market for red-figure vases in Apulia', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 48 (2003), pp. 1–24.



Attic red-figure tradition. There had been a market for Attic vases in Apulia, amongst both the Greeks and the Italic people, and it is generally accepted that early Apulian vase painters were trained in Athens.<sup>6</sup> The style of representing the human body as an ideal form is nearly identical in Attic and Apulian painting, but early on Apulian painters developed distinct iconographic programmes that moved away from traditional Attic representations. So, they could take a traditional Greek shape and use the red-figure technique developed in Athens to paint a traditional Greek scene of a warrior departing, but people it with non-Greeks in local dress with local accoutrements.<sup>7</sup> The important point here is that the Italic people were well aware of Greek ideas and images but chose to adapt them to their own purposes. They were 'hellenized' in the same way that Greeks were 'orientalized' in the seventh century, in the sense that both adapted external influences to create something new.

This new Apulian approach to iconography is made particularly clear in the depictions of deities. While most deities retain the same forms and attributes that they have in Attic painting, Apulian painters use them in new ways. Deities on Attic vases are usually focal in the scene in which they appear, often the subject of a narrative. So, for example, on a famous krater in Paris, Apollo and Artemis dispatch the children of Niobe, and on a skyphos in London, Demeter and Persephone send Triptolemos on his mission.<sup>8</sup> In contrast deities on Apulian vases, more often than not, are peripheral, often like spectators in a gallery watching events unfold. As will become clear, Dionysos is the one big exception to this rule; he is the major deity who appears most frequently on Apulian vases – more than 2,000 of them – and he is usually focal and an active participant in the scenes in which he appears.

On Apulian vases, when gods appear in their gallery – the upper register of a scene – their presence can sometimes be related, to one degree or another, with the scene below. But other times there is no conceivable connection. On a volute krater in Atlanta, perhaps reflecting one of Euripides' *Melanippe* tragedies, the lower register is devoted to mortals. Melanippe with her nurse stands to the far right while her

6 B. Macdonald, 'The emigration of potters from Athens in the late fifth century B.C.', *AJA* 85 (1981), pp. 159–68; M. Denoyelle, 'Attic or non-Attic? The case of the Pistocci Painter', in J. Oakley et al. (eds), *Athenian Potters and Painters* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1997), pp. 395–405.

7 A. D. Trendall, *Gli indigeni nella pittura italiota* (Taranto: Convegno di Studi sulla Magna Grecia, 1971); Carpenter, 'Native market', pp. 12–18.

8 Paris, Louvre G341, *ARV* 601.22; T. H. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), fig. 71; London, British Museum E 140, *ARV* 459.3; Carpenter, *Art and Myth*, fig. 41.

grandfather Hellen gives her twins by Poseidon to a cowherd.<sup>9</sup> Gods inhabit the upper register: Artemis and Apollo converse to the left, a stately Athena stands in the centre, and to the right Aphrodite sits attended by Eros. Poseidon sits to the far right. None of the gods pays much attention to the activity in the scene below. Poseidon's presence might be explained by the fact that he is father of the twins, and so the presence of Aphrodite and Eros could allude to the same event. But neither Athena nor Apollo nor Artemis is ever connected with the myth. The whole group could as easily be explained as a random collection of divine spectators.

In the lower register of a volute krater in London with a depiction of the Hippolytos story, a bull rises up in front of the chariot driven by Hippolytos, as a Fury or Lyssa maddens the horses.<sup>10</sup> Here too the gods inhabit the upper register. To the left Pan talks with a seated Apollo, Athena stands holding a helmet, spear and shield in the centre, and to the right Aphrodite sits attended by Eros. Again, Poseidon sits to the far right. Poseidon might be linked thematically to the scene through his connection with Theseus, and Aphrodite's role is obviously central to the plot. But again, the presence of Athena and Apollo is baffling, and the absence of Artemis is even more puzzling. Here too the 'spectators in the gallery' explanation works as well as any attempt to link the gods to the scene.

The spectator role can, in fact, be more focused. So on a volute krater in Naples from the second quarter of the fourth century, a named Iphigeneia holding a temple key approaches a named Orestes who sits on an altar, beside which stands a named Pylades.<sup>11</sup> Above Iphigeneia is a temple. The scene reflects the recognition scene from Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Tauris* where Iphigeneia is the priestess of Artemis. The inscribed names alone make that perfectly clear. But the painter has also included a seated Artemis with two spears beside her temple, and to the far left sits her brother Apollo. They are observers. And while their presence is appropriate, neither is necessary here, nor would they appear in such a role on an Attic vase.

Each of these scenes requires a quite sophisticated knowledge of Greek myth and probably familiarity with Greek tragedy. An important point here is that both the Hippolytos krater and the Iphigeneia

9 Atlanta, Carlos Museum, Emory University 1994.1, *RVAp* Suppl. 2, 18/283d; O. Taplin, *Pots and Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-Painting of the Fourth Century B.C.* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007), p. 194.

10 London, British Museum F 279, *RVAp* 18/72; Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 138.

11 Naples, Museo Archeologico 82113 (H 3223), *RVAp* 8/3; Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 151.



Figure 16.2 Apulian volute krater: assembled deities seated above.  
Dionysos and Ariadne in a chariot below them.

krater come from non-Greek tombs at the extraordinarily rich Italic site of Ruvo di Puglia. Quite simply, the audience was Italic, not Greek, which is true for the majority of complex scenes on Apulian vases. The Italic people of Apulia were well versed in the dominant culture of the Mediterranean and had been for several centuries.

A scene on a volute krater in Detroit from the second half of the fourth century further illustrates the divine spectator role of the gods and at the same time introduces something new (Fig. 16.2).<sup>12</sup> Across the upper part of the figure scene is an assembly of deities doing nothing in particular. Eros fans a seated Aphrodite next to a seated Apollo, who holds a bow and laurel branch. Athena, wearing her aegis and a helmet, holds a spear and shield as she converses with an enthroned Zeus, who holds a sceptre and is attended by Iris with a kerykeion. Then Hera with a sceptre sits on a stool attended by Hermes. This is the divine family *par excellence* – and it stands in sharp contrast to the scene below, where Dionysos and Ariadne ride in a panther-drawn biga accompanied by a raucous procession of satyrs and maenads with torches and tympana and preparations for a feast.

<sup>12</sup> Detroit Museum of Art 1983.25.

The enervated deities above serve as a foil for the energized god with his thiasos below. Dionysos never appears in the gallery; rather, he is almost always shown as directly connected with the action of the scene in which he appears.

This is unequivocally a funerary vase. In the scene on the reverse a naked youth with a spear stands beside a horse in a small columned building (Fig. 16.3). That type of building is usually called a *naiskos* and said to be a tomb monument.<sup>13</sup> The fact that the youth and the horse are painted white means that they are to be seen as statues, while the figures around the building are mortals offering gifts at the tomb. Similar scenes appear on several hundred Apulian vases from the second half of the fourth century but almost never on vases from a Greek context. But on the neck above the funerary scene on this vase is a symposium scene; a man and a youth reclining on a large couch attended by a woman playing pipes and a boy with wine. So here too Dionysos, as god of the symposium, is implied but in a funerary context. The vase is first and foremost about Dionysos. The other gods are extras. The funerary nature of the vase also implies a connection between Dionysos and death, and perhaps to a perception of an afterlife.

Before going any further, a word should be said about the nature of the vases on which the Dionysiac images appear. Before the middle of the fourth century most of them appear on bell or column kraters of a functional size (c. 35 cm).<sup>14</sup> The shape is, of course, one associated in Greece with the symposium, and while all those we have are from tombs, the question arises, were they designed for the tomb or did their use as tomb goods come after their use in non-funerary social contexts such as the symposium?

Three points can be made about the archaeological evidence: (1) a krater is almost always included as the largest vase in fourth-century Peucetian tombs that include arrays of vases. (2) The krater is often part of larger symposium sets of cups and pitcher in the tomb, and (3) very few fragments of red-figure kraters have been found in domestic contexts at well-excavated sites.<sup>15</sup> So current evidence suggests that Apulian red-figure kraters of a functional size were probably produced for the tomb, though prior to burial these may well have been used during the funerary rituals. Furthermore, large volute kraters, such as the one with Dionysos and Ariadne in the biga just discussed,

13 H. Lohmann, *Grabmäler auf unteritalischen Vasen* (Berlin: Mann, 1979).

14 See *RVAp*, chs 1–7 for 'Early Apulian'.

15 M. Depalo 'Le necropolis della Peucezia nel IV secolo a.C.: elementi di continuità e modifiche', in A. Ciancio (ed.), *Archeologia e territorio l'area Peuceta* (Putignano: Nuovo Servizio, 1989), pp. 91–110.



Figure 16.3 Apulian volute krater: statue of a naked warrior and horse in a tomb monument (*naiskos*).

had no practical function as containers and were certainly produced for funerary use. However, the funerary nature of the vases does not answer the question whether the images on them were seen as a promise, a consoling fantasy or simply a lively decoration.

In the vast majority of the more than 2,000 vases that have been catalogued with Dionysos on them, mostly kraters, the god is part of a jolly procession composed of satyrs and maenads, who often

carry torches and musical instruments and utensils used in symposia – situlas, kottabos stands, cups, wine skins and sometimes even kraters. Occasionally the god stands or sits, attended by satyrs and maenads and sometimes an Eros or a Nike, as here. Almost always, on these vases, he carries a feathery thyrsus, quite different from the Attic ivy version. The scenes are appropriate for symposia, but then again the vessels on which they appear are destined for the tomb. As has often been suggested, the implication seems to be that for the follower of Dionysos, death involves a journey to a symposion of the blessed, as Plato described it,<sup>16</sup> though on the vases we rarely see the symposion, only the procession.

The naked youth I have called Dionysos on these vases is indistinguishable from other youths on the same vases – only his thyrsus and the presence of a satyr allow him to be identified as the god. The youth is Dionysos, but for the mourners at the funeral he may also be understood as the deceased, a votary of the god who has been assimilated with the god.

A vase from the third quarter of the fourth century by the Darius Painter supports this suggestion.<sup>17</sup> On one side a young, naked Dionysos with a thyrsos and a phiale sits on a hillside. To his right a satyr with a thyrsos leans on a stele and holds up a tympanon. To the left of the god a woman with a thyrsos holds up a comic mask, and Eros flies above him with a wreath. Below the god, metal drinking utensils sit on the ground. The god has long hair and wears an elaborate wreath. There can be little question but that this is the god himself. However, on the other side of the vase there is a spare scene in which a naked youth with a thyrsos and an offering tray sits on a hill, while a woman with a mirror and a thyrsos stands in front of him. The youth has short hair and a simple fillet. He parallels Dionysos on the other side, but the scene itself is a pale reflection of it. Seen by itself we might be inclined to identify the figure as Dionysos, but in the context it is more likely that we are to see him as a mortal follower of the god.

There was a fully developed form for representations of Dionysos right from the start of the Apulian red-figure tradition, which was in some ways different from the Attic form. One early painter in particular, usually dubbed the Painter of the Birth of Dionysos, who stands at the beginning of the ornate style of painting, demonstrates a deep knowledge of and interest in the god. His name-vase, a large volute krater, was found at Ceglie del Campo, an Italic site near

<sup>16</sup> Plato, *Republic* 363c–d.

<sup>17</sup> Tampa, Zewadski, *RVAp* 18/64f.

Ruvo.<sup>18</sup> The scene provides an early example of the gods as passive observers – unnecessary to the scene. Eros attends Aphrodite to the upper left, Apollo stands by a seated Artemis in the upper right. Below, Hermes stands looking up and to the left of him are three unidentified goddesses. A satyr dances in the lower right and Pan observes from the upper centre. In the centre of the scene a named infant Dionysos emerges from the thigh of a named seated Zeus and reaches out towards a veiled woman who has a sceptre. The woman should be Eileithyia, the birth goddess, but the presence of the sceptre has led some to call her Hera-Eleithyia or even Hera. But to anyone who knows the myths of the birth of Dionysos, Hera is precisely who she should not be. It is possible that the woman is connected to local versions of the birth.<sup>19</sup>

The vase, it should be noted, was found together with another volute krater with a magnificent depiction of a young Dionysos with his kantharos and a flowering giant fennel stalk seated amidst satyrs and maenads.<sup>20</sup> On Attic vases Dionysos invariably holds a thyrsos – a fennel stalk stuffed with ivy leaves. The flowering giant fennel stalk, often called a narthex, is a south Italian development.

Perhaps the most extraordinary scene by the Painter of the Birth of Dionysos is a depiction of a sacrifice on a volute krater found at Ruvo di Puglia (Fig. 16.4).<sup>21</sup> In the centre of the upper register a young, naked Dionysos sits, with a narthex resting on his right shoulder. To the right and left of him are women and a satyr. In the register below are more women. One woman, acting as a priestess, prepares to sacrifice a goat at an altar on which a fire burns. Just to the right of the altar is a table with an oinochoe on it, and a woman prepares to place on it a tray of offerings. What is extraordinary about this scene is the statue of Dionysos behind the altar. He is an archaic, bearded figure wearing a short chiton and boots, who holds a kantharos and a thyrsos. This is the bearded form of the god that invariably appears in Attic representations of him until the 420s BC – it is a form he is almost never given in Apulian vases.

This richly detailed scene demonstrates a deep knowledge of the worship of Dionysos. It depicts a noisy scene with women clashing cymbals and beating tympana. A calyx krater on a stand and a booted

18 Taranto, Museo Archeologico, inv. 8264, *RVAp* 2/6.

19 Betsy Gebhard has suggested to me that the woman could be Ino, the sister of Semele, who in some versions of the myth of the birth of Dionysos receives the infant from Hermes. If she is Ino, her presence at the birth itself is a uniquely south Italian invention.

20 Taranto, Museo Archeologico, inv. 8263; A. D. Trendall, *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 55, #280.

21 Naples, Museo Archeologico, 82922 (H.2411), *RVAp* 2/8.



Figure 16.4 Apulian volute krater: women preparing a sacrifice to Dionysos while the god himself reclines above.

silen with a wine skin and a kottabos cup remind us of his connection with wine, and a female mask suspended near the silen alludes to his role in theatre. A maenad with a torch places the scene at night, and a thymaterion to the right emphasizes the ritual nature of the scene. The goat, of course, is the appropriate animal for the sacrifice.

In fact, the scene points to different dimensions of this multifaceted god – his connection with wine, his connection with the theatre, and perhaps even the festival sacrifice to him at the Choes. But it is the young, naked Dionysos the painter has chosen to emphasize, and this, as I have noted, is the form the god is given on most of the 2,000 depictions of him on Apulian vases.

Three points are particularly important for our purposes here: first, this scene comes, *c.* 400 BC, at the beginning of the tradition of ornate figure-decorated vases in Apulia; second, the vase was found in a tomb in the Italic settlement at Ruvo di Puglia. Third, it is very likely that it was specifically painted for these Italic people rather than for Greeks. The shape, a volute krater, is almost never found in Greek contexts in south Italy; rather, it was a shape favoured by the inhabitants of settlements on the east coast of Apulia, particularly in Peucetia.<sup>22</sup>

22 Carpenter, *Native Market*, pp. 8–10.



In these vases at the beginning of a local vase-painting tradition, we have a fully developed conception of Dionysos. As mentioned earlier, the Dionysos who appears on Attic vases prior to 420 is almost always a bearded adult – then very suddenly he is replaced by a beardless youth.<sup>23</sup> In fact, we can even identify the Attic painter who first depicts the young, beardless Dionysos – called the Dinos Painter – and quite remarkably, the traditional, bearded figure rarely appears after that.<sup>24</sup> One can speculate that the vessels on which the new form appears had a new and different function that called for a different perception of the god, but it is the suddenness of the change in Athens that is particularly striking.

Attic vases found in Apulian tombs show that the Italic people knew well the older, traditional form of the god, but they always chose to represent him as a beardless youth. This form seems to have had special meaning for them, and it is worth asking a radical question here: might the sudden shift in representations of Dionysos on Attic vases have been influenced by the Apulian perception of the god – a new dimension associated with the promise of a blessed afterlife? By the mid-fifth century Athenians knew of the prominence of Dionysos in Italy, as Sophocles demonstrates in the fifth stasimon of *Antigone* when the chorus calls to Dionysos first as ‘you who rule famous Italy’.<sup>25</sup> Albert Henrichs has convincingly shown that the Dionysos of this hymn, linked as he is with Demeter and Eleusis, is distinctly not the wine god or the theatre god but rather is the god who is ‘a champion of the dead and a guarantor of a personal afterlife’.<sup>26</sup> The scene of the sacrifice discussed above might almost be seen as an illustration of that point.

Pierre Willeumier wrote in his masterly 1939 study of Taranto that ‘texts and monuments prove that Dionysos is the principal god of the region around Taranto’.<sup>27</sup> Enzo Lippolis, recently commenting on this passage, writes that none the less we are still largely ignorant of the location of such a cult.<sup>28</sup> The texts are mostly late, third century BC

23 T. H. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery in Fifth Century Athens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 85–103.

24 For the Dinos Painter, *ARV*1151–5.

25 Soph. *Antigone* 1118–20. M. Griffith, *Sophocles: Antigone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 318, sees this as an authentic passage.

26 A. Henrichs, ‘Between country and city: cultic dimensions of Dionysus in Athens and Attica’, in M. Griffith and D. Mastronarde (eds), *Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 264–9.

27 P. Willeumier, *Tarente des origines à la conquête romaine* (Paris: De Boccard, 1939), p. 496.

28 E. Lippolis et al., *Culti Greci in Occidente* (Taranto: Istituto per la storia e l’archeologia della Magna Grecia, 1995), p. 140.

or later, and the monuments are mostly vases. While Dionysos may have been important in Taranto in the fifth and fourth centuries, the vast number of Dionysiac vases found in Italic settings (as opposed to the few found in Taranto) must lead to the conclusion that Dionysos was a principal god of the Italics and that the imagery suggests he was in some ways different from the traditional deity we know in Greece proper.

An extraordinary scene on an Apulian volute krater in Toledo, Ohio, where Dionysos shakes hands with Hades in the Underworld – the only known depiction of him in the Underworld – is a fundamental document for any discussion of Dionysos in south Italy (Fig. 16.5).<sup>29</sup> Sarah Johnston and Tim McNiven are surely right in their important analysis of the scene when they write that the handclasp signifies ‘the authority that Dionysos held in the realm of the dead’, and as such it helps to confirm a funerary context for the generic scenes in which the god appears.<sup>30</sup> But to come full circle, I return to the points I made earlier about time and place. Because the krater first appeared on the art market, it has no recorded provenance. However, a study of provenances of comparable vases – by the same painter, in the same shape and with a similar subject on the reverse – makes a provenance of an Italic tomb highly likely. The *naiskos* scene on the reverse confirms its funerary purposes.

Dated to about 340 BC, it is attributed to the Darius Painter, a brilliant innovator who recognized the possibilities of using the surface of large funerary vases as a medium for the expression of complex ideas about death and the human condition. Not only was he an accomplished painter, but he also had a vast knowledge of Greek myth and literature, which he could manipulate much like a dramatist, to his own purposes. On many vases, as here, he includes Greek inscriptions to identify characters or even to name scenes. Having recognized a market amongst the rich Italics in settlements like Ruvo di Puglia and Ceglie del Campo, he seems to have catered to them in fashioning his imagery. Had his Italic clients not been able to understand the allusions and inscriptions on the vase, he would have had little incentive to produce such subtle and carefully crafted imagery. He clearly intended to communicate more than an entertaining story.

On this vase he includes a remarkable group of three in the upper right of the scene paralleled by a satyr and two maenads in the upper left. All three are named: Pentheus converses with his cousin Aktaion

29 Toledo, Museum of Art 1994.19, *RVAp* 18.41a1

30 S. Johnston and T. McNiven, ‘Dionysos and the Underworld in Toledo’, *Museum Helveticum* 53 (1996), pp. 25–36.



*Figure 16.5* Apulian volute krater: Dionysos touches the hand of Hades while Persephone looks on. To the left, a satyr and maenads; to the right, Aktaion, Pentheus and Agave.

while below them Agave, the mother and murderer of Pentheus, leans on a louterion. This is the only known instance of a named Agave in vase painting. The allusion must be to Euripides' *Bacchae*, which the painter assumes his audience will understand. Such was the sophistication of the Italic audience for whom Dionysos had long been a principal deity, a people whom we are just beginning to discover.

## LUCIAN'S GODS: LUCIAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIVINE

*Matthew W. Dickie*

The only existing full-scale study of Lucian's thinking on the subject of the divine is that undertaken in the 1930s by the French scholar Marcel Caster.<sup>1</sup> He came to what seems to me a startling conclusion, that Lucian was an atheist in the modern acceptance of the word; he was someone who went well beyond the Epicurean position, that there were gods, but that they did not intervene in the world, to the much more radical proposition that there were no gods at all. Caster had reached that judgement by telling himself that only someone who was seriously irreligious and who indeed thought the notion of the divine was a bad joke could have mocked the gods as Lucian did; Lucian's abiding concern was with preserving Greek culture from bad taste, ignorance and barbarity. It is possible to draw quite different conclusions, as I shall attempt to do, from much the same body of evidence.

To get at what Lucian himself thought is difficult. There are a number of reasons for this. For a start, Lucian virtually never, while speaking in his own voice, commits himself to a position on the nature of the gods and their place in the cosmic order. It is besides not at all easy to say when Lucian is speaking in his own voice and not that of a persona assumed for the moment. The problem becomes the more acute when works in which Lucian does not speak in his own voice are brought into the equation. Does the standpoint from which these essays or dialogues are written represent Lucian's own point of view or is it just one that fits the subject in hand? Does he subscribe to the arguments deployed in them? Does he actually suppose, for instance, that the notion of Fate or Necessity deprives the gods of any power to initiate action on their own? There are two dialogues in which an interlocutor asks questions that bring to light the inconsistencies in what is said, principally in Homer, about the gods and fate. The interlocutor argues that since in Homer the Fates or Fate allot men and the

1 *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1937).

gods their destinies, it makes no sense to say that the gods exercise any control over the affairs of men; various further conclusions are drawn: for instance, there is no point in praying and sacrificing to the gods, as they can do nothing for us; and men cannot be held to account for their actions, since they are not responsible for them. In the dialogues, the *Iuppiter Confutatus* and the *Iuppiter Tragoedus*, the arguments that demolish Zeus' pretensions to power and authority are delivered with considerable brio. Is this Lucian speaking or is there some other explanation?

Plutarch wrote an elegant essay attacking Herodotus for imposing a malevolent construction on the motives of a number of the actors in his *Histories*. It would be a deeply naïve person who supposed that the *De Malignitate Herodoti* represented Plutarch's considered view of Herodotus and who did not entertain the possibility that it was just a clever set-piece. There are works in the Lucianic corpus that are almost certainly not to be taken at face value. The treatise on astrology, the *De astrologia*, is a case in point. It is a history and defence of astrology written in Ionic like the *De Dea Syria*. If we take the essay seriously, must we conclude Lucian believed that men's lot was determined by the conjunction of stars under which they were born? Most scholars have taken it seriously and then denied that it can be by Lucian, since it defends a branch of divination, an art whose validity Lucian appears to question elsewhere. The possibility that the *De astrologia* makes fun of the *apologiae* of astrology to be found in contemporary astrological handbooks is hardly considered. If the work is by Lucian, as there are good technical reasons for thinking it is, and is intended to be a spoof, it tells us nothing directly about Lucian's own views on astrology, fate and the gods, although it does suggest that he was not sympathetic to the lines of reasoning justifying astrology that are a feature of astrological texts written by such contemporaries of his as Claudius Ptolemaeus and Vettius Valens.<sup>2</sup>

Other essays give rise to misgivings of a different order. There is a work on sacrifice, the *De sacrificiis*, that condemns not only blood sacrifice but also making offerings of any kind to the gods, because both practices proceed from the premise that the divine is not self-sufficient, is open to flattery and cherishes grudges and resentments. The temptation is to assume that here we have Lucian's own views on the essence of the divine and to go on from there to argue that Lucian

2 Stylistic reasons for treating the essay as authentic are given by J. Lightfoot, *Lucian: On the Syrian Goddess Edited with an Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 191–96. For an attempt at explaining what is going on in the *De astrologia*, see the note written by Leofranc Holford-Strevens and quoted by Lightfoot at p. 195 n. 502.

believed in a self-sufficient divine being, superior to petty human emotions. The enthusiasm with which we embrace such a conclusion must be tempered by the knowledge that Lucian's essay is probably not a direct and unmediated statement of his personal views, but a reworking of a theme to which the Cynic satirist Menippos of Gadara had turned his hand.<sup>3</sup>

It is also tempting to imagine that behind the repeated assaults made in Lucian on the view of the divine to be derived from Homer lies a more sophisticated and refined vision of the nature of the gods. But if Lucian had such a view, he gives at best only hints of what it is. He keeps his feelings very much to himself. He may have done so because he thought dilating on the topic would constitute a failure of taste, or he may not in fact have had a fully thought-out position on the subject. He was not after all a philosopher, let alone a systematic theologian. Granted that Lucian does not present himself as a philosopher, he may still have been exposed to contemporary discussion about the nature of the divine and have been influenced by it. My personal suspicion is that he had thought about the topic, but had not put a sustained effort into it and that furthermore he did not think it appropriate to parade his views in public.

It might be of some help in our quest if we knew a little more about who Lucian was. As it is, we know precious little for certain, other than where he was born, when he lived and some sketchy details about his training and career. He must have been born sometime around AD 120 and have lived for another sixty or so years, until the 180s. His place of birth, Samosata, had been the capital of Commagene while that small country was first part of the Seleucid empire and then a client state of Rome. In Lucian's day, it belonged to the Roman province of Syria. Lucian in a number of dialogues speaks of himself or is referred to as a Syrian or Assyrian.<sup>4</sup> Whether Lucian's native language was Aramaic or Syriac or a form of Greek peculiar to Samosata, he evidently felt that he spoke Greek impeccably, betraying no trace of his origins. As a youth, Lucian had studied rhetoric in Ionia and had then travelled to Greece, Italy and Gaul to give rhetorical displays. From an *apologia* for an apparent inconsistency in his conduct we learn that his abilities were such as to catch the eye of a Roman appointed to

3 J. Geffcken, 'Menippos ΠΕΡΙ ΘΥΣΙΩΝ', *Hermes* 66 (1931), pp. 347–54.

4 Syrian: *Pisc.* 19, *Bis accus.* 14, 25, *Adv. indoct.* 19; Assyrian: *Bis accus.* 27, *D. Syr.* 1. On the interpretation of Lucian's assertion of his Syrian identity, see C. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 7; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 454–6; S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 299; Lightfoot, *Lucian*, p. 205.

the governorship of Egypt; Lucian was invited to become part of his cabinet; the post he was to hold combined the role of an investigating magistrate with that of a legal draftsman; it also encompassed a general supervision of the court over which the governor presided; it was a job whose counterpart in the imperial cabinet was the secretary *a cognitionibus*.<sup>5</sup> The post carried the possibility of further imperial preferment, either as the *procurator* of a province or some other position in the gift of the emperor. That Lucian should have been offered such a position should not be occasion for surprise. He possessed one of the prerequisites for the job, a knowledge of Latin, although he shows no sign of ever having read any Latin literature.<sup>6</sup> But more significantly, there are indications, particularly in the essay on the Cynic Peregrinus, that in Lucian we have a man who identified with the problems faced by high officials in the imperial administration. A governor of Syria who released Peregrinus from prison, after he had been gaoled for being a Christian, is characterized as a man who has a taste for philosophy.<sup>7</sup> He wins the accolade since he had the sense to see what Peregrinus' game was: he wanted to be put to death to make himself famous. The same Peregrinus, after he had been forced to abandon Christianity, remade himself as a Cynic holy man and came to Rome, where he spoke abusively of the emperor, Antoninus Pius, a perfectly safe tactic in view of the emperor's character. But because his effrontery was attracting too great crowds, the *praefectus urbis* expelled him from Rome and Italy, saying Rome had no need of such a philosopher. Again the action wins Lucian's approbation.<sup>8</sup> This was no outsider railing against the follies of humanity.

Lucian's appointment to a position of high authority in the *concilium*, the inner circle, of the *praefectus* of Egypt suggests a man not viewed as dangerously irreligious, in ancient terms, an ἄθεος, let alone as atheistical in the modern understanding of the word. It looks as if the criticisms of religious beliefs and practices that are found in his writings, to the extent that anyone paid any attention to them, were taken not as evidence of a spirit that had no respect for the divine, but in some other way.

One obvious way of getting a fix on Lucian's religious beliefs is to ascertain what philosophical school, if any, had his sympathies. That

5 *Apol.* 12. On the post, see O. Hirschfeld, *Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diocletian* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905<sup>3</sup>), p. 331 n. 2.

6 Evidence for Lucian's knowledge of Latin: *Laps.* 13; *Salt.* 67. See also Caster, *Lucien*, pp. 369–70; L. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* (Paris: De Boccard, 1958), p. 505; Jones, *Culture and Society*, p. 89.

7 *Peregr.* 14: ἀνδρὸς φιλοσοφία χαίροντος.

8 *Peregr.* 18: ὁ τὴν πόλιν ἐπιτετραμμένος ἀνὴρ σοφὸς ἀπέπεμψεν αὐτόν.

is more easily said than done and turns out in the end to be not very enlightening. Lucian has a great deal to say about philosophers, but rather less about the tenets of the philosophical schools. Philosophers are in fact one of his bugbears: they are uniformly hairy, bearded individuals with at best a solemn visage, if not a scowl; they carry knapsacks and staffs and wear a shabby and threadbare cloak. Despite their pretensions to a superiority to all things material, their bodily appetites are in no better control than those of anyone else; a desire for money is their main motivating factor.

Lucian has only the most rudimentary remarks to make about the tenets of the various philosophical school; of the doctrines of the Peripatetics he has nothing to say, presumably because it was especially difficult to encapsulate their positions in a nutshell. It has been asserted that Lucian displays no knowledge of the developments that had taken place in philosophy since the days of Plato and the founding fathers of the Stoa.<sup>9</sup> That is not in fact true, although it is an impression that only a careful reading will dispel. We should not be misled by Lucian's failure to parade his knowledge of philosophy; he aims at the light touch; a more ponderous and pedantic account of a philosophical system or position would in his eyes have been a lapse in taste.

There are two philosophical schools for which Lucian does at times display some sympathy, the Epicureans and the Sceptics. He also gives the impression of having a fondness for the way in which the persons who called themselves Cynics responded to life, but his admiration is by no means unqualified: he throws scorn on the members of the sect who gathered at Olympia during the Olympic Games of AD 165 to see one of their number, the Peregrinus whom we have just met, cast himself into a burning pyre to be consumed in its flames in the manner of the Cynic hero Herakles. What Lucian dislikes about Peregrinus and the Cynics who behaved in the same fashion as he did was their seeking attention for themselves by their uncouth and uncivilized conduct. One of Lucian's contemporaries who presented himself as a Cynic, Demonax, does earn his admiration, not least for the exquisite tact he displayed in his relations with others (*Demon.* 6).

There is, in addition, some reason to believe that Lucian owes a debt to another Cynic, Oinomaos of Gadara, who lived in the time of Hadrian, and to his treatise the *Φώρα γοήτων* or *Wizards Unmasked*, a work in which the shortcomings of oracles are exposed. Its author insisted that the fraud lay with men, not with the divine.<sup>10</sup> The thrust

9 Caster, *Lucien*, p. 107.

10 On the identity and date of Oinomaos, see P. Vallette, *De Oenomaio Cynico* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1908), pp. 1–9; H. Mette, 'Oinomaos (5)', *RE* 17 (1937), pp. 2249–51 at



of the treatise is very much in tune with Lucian's *Alexander*, the essay in which Lucian claims to expose the tricks and devices that the subject of the essay had employed in establishing an oracular shrine in his home town of Abonuteichos on the southern shore of the Black Sea. The unmasking of fraudulent claims to supernatural powers is a facet of Cynicism that would have very much appealed to Lucian. There was, long before Oinomaos, a Cynic tradition of mocking those who placed their faith in certain superstitious practices such as the wearing of amulets.<sup>11</sup> It may be that Lucian admired the Cynics, because they questioned conventional morality and seemed to be free and authentic spirits, but we should not forget that these aspects of Cynic behaviour fitted well with Lucian's rôle as a satirist and that Lucian imagined his writings followed a course already set by the Cynic satirist, Menippos.

In the essay exposing the tricks and illusions that Alexander had employed in setting up an oracle in Abonuteichos, Lucian does not appeal to Cynic literary precedents; it is the Epicureans whose hostility to claims to supernatural powers is held up for admiration. Lucian, in fact, says that he had written the tract as a defence of Epicurus, a truly holy and divine man, who, he declares, alone had a real understanding of what was noble; he was a man who had passed that knowledge on to his associates and so acted as their liberator.<sup>12</sup> Earlier in the essay Lucian had described the Κύριαι Δόξαι of Epicurus as the noblest of books (13). The extremely flattering way in which Lucian speaks of Epicurus and his writings might suggest that Lucian was to all intents and purposes a paid-up Epicurean. But his professions of enthusiasm for Epicurus and his ideas must be seen in context. The essay is dedicated to a man called Celsus, who was undoubtedly an Epicurean.<sup>13</sup> Lucian, in fact, says that Celsus will be especially appreciative of his having written the *Alexander* to defend Epicurus and he appeals to Celsus' appreciation of the importance of the Κύριαι Δόξαι (*Alex.* 61, 47). What made Celsus a particularly suitable dedicatee was that

2250; J. Hammerstaedt, *Die Orakelkritik des Kynikers Oenomaos* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1988), pp. 11–18; on the meaning of the title, see Vallette, *De Oenomaos Cynico*, pp. 24–5; Hammerstaedt, *Orakelkritik*, pp. 33–8; on Lucian's debt to Oinomaos, see I. Bruns, 'Lucian und Oinomaos', *Rheinisches Museum* 44 (1889), pp. 374–96.

<sup>11</sup> Bion of Borysthenes F 30 Kindstrand with T 50 Kindstrand.

<sup>12</sup> *Alex.* 61. Similarly at 25 and 47.

<sup>13</sup> He is not the Platonist whom Origen attacks in the *Contra Celsum*, as Origen himself eventually realized. Cf. M. Frede, 'Celsus' attack on the Christians', in J. Barnes and M. Griffin (eds), *Philosophia Togata. II: Plato and Aristotle at Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 223–8.

he had composed treatises in which he exposed the tricks magicians employed to fool the gullible (*Alex.* 21).

The *Alexander*, broadly speaking, belongs to the Epicurean tradition of freeing men from irrational fears induced by belief in entities such as ghosts, and is dedicated to an Epicurean who had written in the same tradition. Lucian may well have thought Epicureanism admirable to the extent that it helped rid men of irrational fears, but it does not follow that he subscribed wholeheartedly to Epicureanism because he praises Epicurus in a work dedicated to an Epicurean. An insight into what Lucian thought important about Epicureanism is what he puts at the forefront of the benefits conferred by the *Κύρια Δόξα*: it rids those who read it of fears, visions and monstrous wonders; then it frees them from vain hopes and excessive desires, implants in them truth and really and truly purifies the mind, not with torches, squills and other such nonsense, but with reason, truth and the unvarnished expression of belief (*Alex.* 47). The picture that Lucian paints of the benefits conferred by the *Κύρια Δόξα* tells us more about what Lucian thought important in Epicureanism than it does about the contents of the *Κύρια Δόξα*, a work which affords little or no relief to those hagridden by fear of the supernatural. It is not even altogether certain that the fears from which Epicurus tried to set men free were those that Lucian has in mind; they were rather the Underworld and the punishments assigned wrongdoers there.

The somewhat misleading picture of the contents of the *Κύρια Δόξα* that Lucian gives us is no warrant for supposing that he had only a superficial knowledge of Epicurean writing. He betrays a surprisingly detailed knowledge of the letters of Epicurus in an essay in which he apologizes for a lapse in good manners in greeting at his morning *levée* someone who was evidently a man of some importance with *ὕγιανε*, and not the more usual, *χαῖρε*: he notes that Epicurus in his more serious letters, of which there are few, and also in those to his intimates begins the letter with the greeting *ὕγιανε* (*Laps.* 6).

A case can be made for saying that Lucian was sympathetic to the Epicurean endeavour to the extent that it freed men from fear of ghosts and apparitions and from giving credence to magicians. There are two other essays besides the *Alexander* in which crediting humans with supernatural powers is mocked, the *Philopseudes* and the *Peregrinus*. It is hard to believe that Lucian would have written three works in which those who give credence to ghosts and magic are ridiculed if he had not himself been a sceptic about such matters. It is still an open question whether Lucian was well disposed towards the larger Epicurean enterprise and, in particular, was of the view that the gods existed in a realm of their own and took no part in managing human

affairs, while at the same believing that it was important to participate in public worship of the gods.

As for Lucian's interest in the Sceptics, it cannot be demonstrated that it went very much beyond the application of the techniques Sceptics used to show that an argument was formally invalid and proved nothing. There is one dialogue, the *Hermotimos*, in which one interlocutor demolishes the hopes that the other interlocutor, a man called Hermotimos, has of attaining philosophical enlightenment by demonstrating that he can never know what it would be to attain it. He does so by pointing out the formal weaknesses in Hermotimos' arguments. There is little sign, on the other hand, that Lucian has any great inclination to adopt the larger Sceptical position, that of withholding assent.

So much then for Lucian's philosophical sympathies; they really do not help us form a picture of his theology, other than that he did not believe human beings and objects had supernatural powers. At this point in my argument I abandon caution and try, using both Lucian speaking in his own voice and characters whose standpoint seems to reflect his own, to construct a sketch of Lucian's view of the divine. The dangers in the approach are obvious, but when Lucian or sympathetic characters repeatedly appeal to a certain point of view, there is a *prima facie* case for supposing that this is a position Lucian favours.

I begin the discussion by disposing of the proposition that Lucian believed in the rule of Fate or Destiny, despite the fact that speakers in several dialogues appeal to the notion to put Zeus in his place and remind him that he is not an independent actor in human affairs but only part of the allotted scheme of things. Lucian in his *Apologia* refuses to deny responsibility for conduct for which he had been criticized by arguing that his actions were the product of a higher power and that it was not of his own choosing that he had been led to them. He does so on the ground that no trained mind would offer such a defence, and because the person to whom the *Apologia* is dedicated would not tolerate his invoking the verses in the *Iliad* that say that no one can escape his fate and that a lot is given men at birth.<sup>14</sup> It is a line of argument that he abandons as implausible.<sup>15</sup> It would have been helpful to know what made Lucian think he could not get away with arguing that, as he was subject to a higher power, he was not responsible for his actions. His reasoning can only be a matter of surmise,

14 *Il.* 6.488, 20.128.

15 *Apol.* 8: ἡ τοῦτο μὲν κομιδὴ ἰδιωτικόν, καὶ οὐδ' ἂν σύ με, ὦ φιλότης, ἀνάσχοιο τοιαύτην ἀπολογίαν προσισχόμενον . . . εἰ δὲ τοῦτον ἀφείς τὸν λόγον ὡς οὐ πάνυ ἀξιόπιστον.

but whatever he is, he is not a determinist, who believes his lot is cast by Fate. We may also conclude, but with rather less assurance, that Lucian does not in fact suppose that Zeus and the gods are not independent agents and that their actions are controlled by Fate.

I turn now to the positive evidence for Lucian's understanding of the divine. The tract known as the *Philopseudes* or *Love of Lies* takes the form of a man called Tychiades recounting for the benefit of a friend the tall tales about the supernatural he had heard told by persons who had come to visit a philosopher who was suffering from gout. The tale-tellers are a Peripatetic, a Stoic, a Platonist, a doctor and a Pythagorean, who joins the party at a later stage. There is no Epicurean or Cynic present. Tychiades has no time for the tall tales they tell, but is puzzled that people should tell such falsehoods and have no ulterior motive for doing so. His standpoint is one with which it looks as though Lucian would have had some sympathy.<sup>16</sup> By his own lights, Tychiades is a man who reveres the gods or, at any rate, the divine, but does not believe that it is possible to produce physical effects by non-physical causes. In one passage, he remarks that anyone who does not believe in the castration of Kronos or the binding of Prometheus or Pan's coming from Arcadia to help the Athenians at Marathon is held to be an irreverent spirit, an *ἄσεβής*, and not quite in his right mind for not accepting what is manifestly clear and true (3). The implication is that he feels that he is properly reverential of the divine, *εὐσεβής*, even though he does not accept the truth of such stories. In a second passage, Tychiades argues that amulets will not cure disease; an externally worn amulet that has no connection with what is within that arouses the illness cannot be effective and dispatch a cure; furthermore, if wearing an amulet made of a portion of the hide of a lion is a capital cure for gout, why is it that lions are to be seen hobbling around in pain wearing entire hides?<sup>17</sup> His argument makes no impression on Deinomachos, a Stoic; the latter expostulates indignantly: Tychiades is an utter ignoramus, who would evidently not even accept what is manifestly true, the dismissal of periodic fevers, snake-charming and the other kinds of thing that even old women do. Tychiades' response is that the speaker begs the question, since what

16 Cf. H.-G. Nesselrath, 'Lukian: Leben und Werk', in M. Ebner et al., *Lukian. Die Lügenfreunde oder: Der Ungläubige* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), p. 166: 'sein Alter Ego Tychiades'.

17 *Philops.* 8: ἔμοιγε, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, εἰ μὴ πᾶν κορύζης τὴν ῥίνα μεστός εἴην, ὥς πιστεύειν τὰ ἔξω καὶ μὴδὲν κοινωνοῦντα τοῖς ἐνδοθεν ἐπεγείρουσιν τὰ νοσήματα μετὰ ῥηματίων, ὥς φατε, καὶ γοητείας τινὸς ἐνεργεῖν καὶ τὴν ἴασιν ἐπιπέμπειν προσαρτώμενα. τὸ δ' οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο, οὐδ' ἦν ἐς τοῦ Νεμείου λέοντος τὸ δέσμα ἐνδήσῃ τις ἑκκακαίδεκα ὅλας μυγᾶλας· ἐγὼ γοῦν αὐτὸν λέοντα εἶδον πολλάκις χωλεύοντα ὑπ' ἀλγηδόνων ἐν ὀλοκλήρῳ τῷ αὐτοῦ δέσματι.

has to be demonstrated is that incantations have the power to cause fevers and swellings to run away in fear on the utterance of the name of a god or some non-Greek phrase (9). This further rejection leads Deinomachos to exclaim that since Tychiades gives no credence to deeds of healing performed with holy words, he surely does not believe in the existence of the gods (10). Tychiades replies that the Stoic has no business drawing such a conclusion; there is no incompatibility between the falseness of such cures and the existence of the gods; in fact, he pays the gods worship, and recognizes the cures they effect and the benefits they confer on the sick in raising them from their beds by means of potions and the medical art; indeed Asklepios and his sons effected cures by applying gentle drugs; they did not use amulets made from lions and weasels (10). This is the only passage in the *Philopseudes* in which formal and sustained argument is employed to demonstrate that a category of the beliefs that the various philosophers present hold to be self-evidently true is untenable. The care with which the case against amuletic and incantatory medical cures is put together suggests that Lucian may be presenting his own position. What then is the position of his alter ego, Tychiades? Whoever the man is, he is no Epicurean, since he acknowledges that the gods intervene in human affairs, though the manner of their doing so is never explained. He is a man who accepts the evidence of his senses and believes that changes are effected by the physical acting on the physical. Yet, while rejecting myths about the gods, he still believes himself εὐσεβής, since he accords the gods due reverence. The role that the gods play in healing men in his scheme of things is that they act through the agency of doctors and the physical preparations they apply.

What emerges from the *Philopseudes* is a man who gives due reverence to the gods without believing in fantastic stories about them. He is a man who believes that the gods intervene in human affairs, but only through explicable physical agencies. That leaves us a good deal short of knowing what Lucian's understanding of the divine was. Lucian's *Demonax* and his treatise on sacrifice, the *De sacrificiis*, may shed some light on the problem. It is no Epicurean god that emerges, worshipped with the conventional forms of piety, which is to say, blood sacrifice and prayer, but a self-sufficient deity, superior to petty human emotions, not to be conceived as a glorified human being, much less as an animal, not a god to be bribed or placated by blood sacrifice. The *De sacrificiis* begins with Lucian's expostulating at the fatuity of what men do in sacrificing to the gods, in holding festivals in their honour and in conducting processions to their temples; then there are their pleas and prayers to the gods and finally there is the picture that they have of them; it would be a pretty sorry person who did not find all

of this ridiculous and ask himself whether such men should be called pious and not its opposite, enemies of the divine and wretches, since they imagine the gods to be so debased and ignoble beings as to be in need of men's help, as to take pleasure in receiving flattery and as to be annoyed by their neglect.<sup>18</sup> Lucian now brings up stories taken principally from Homer in which the gods respond to sacrifice in the way he has condemned, and proceeds from there to cite a selection of tales found in Homer that suggest that sacrifice is essentially a commercial transaction in which men purchase goods from the gods.<sup>19</sup>

The indications are that the author of the *De sacrificiis* operates with a conception of the divine in which god is a transcendent being who is all good and contains all of goodness in himself, a condition that makes him totally self-sufficient. It is a conception of the divine that is to be found in Justin, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, to name some of Lucian's Christian contemporaries. It has its roots in Plato and is given explicit expression in the Platonism of Philo Judaeus. The key terms used in the Platonic tradition of the self-sufficiency of the divine are ἐπιδεής, ἀνεπιδεής and προσδεής. So in the *De Cherubim* of Philo we read that the divine is not a salesman who lowers the price of his goods, but one who bestows everything freely, pouring forth everlasting springs of kindness, expecting no return; he has no need of anything, nor is any one of those who have come into being capable of reciprocating his gift.<sup>20</sup> The concept of self-sufficiency is linked here and elsewhere in Philo to the notion of the infinite generosity of the divine. That same notion is implicit in the *De sacrificiis*.

The difficulty with treating the *De sacrificiis* as testimony to Lucian's own thinking is that there is the distinct likelihood it is in some measure indebted to Menippos' work on sacrifice. Granted that there was a treatise by Menippos on sacrifice, that does not mean that Lucian did not put the impress of his own thinking on the theme. Our anxieties about the evidentiary value of the *De sacrificiis* may be assuaged a little by the observation that it contains one of the themes to which characters in Lucian's dialogues repeatedly return, the degrading stories told by poets about the gods. In the case of the *De sacrificiis*, the stories are rehearsed to explain why men have, out of

18 *Sacr.* 1: πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐξετάσει πότερον εὐσεβεῖς αὐτοὺς χρὴ καλεῖν ἢ τοῦναντίον θεοῖς ἐχθροὺς καὶ κακοδαίμονας, οἳ γε οὕτω ταπεινὸν καὶ ἀγεννὲς τὸ θεῖον ὑπελήψασιν ὥστε εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἐνδεῆς καὶ κολακευόμενον ἥδεσθαι καὶ ἀγανακτεῖν ἀμελοῦμενον.

19 *Sacr.* 2: οὕτως οὐδέν, ὥς ἔοικεν, ἀμισθὶ ποιοῦσιν ὧν ποιοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ πωλοῦσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰγαθὰ, καὶ ἔνεστι πρίασθαι αὐτῶν τὸ μὲν ὑγιαίνειν, εἰ τύχοι, βοϊδίου, τὸ δὲ πλουτεῖν βοῶν τεττάρων κτλ.

20 *Cherub* 123: ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὐ πωλητὴρ, ἐπευονίζων τὰ ἑαυτοῦ κτήματα, δωρητικὸς δὲ τῶν πάντων, ἀνάουτος χαρίτων πηγὰς ἀναχέων ἀμοιβῆς οὐκ ἐφίεμενος· οὔτε γὰρ ἐπιδεῆς αὐτὸς οὔτε τις τῶν γεγονότων ἱκανὸς ἀντιδοῦναι δωρεάν.

a mistaken understanding of the divine, established the institution of blood sacrifice. In the *Philopseudes*, the stories are cited as an example of the fictions that men are prepared to believe about the gods, even though the speaker himself suggests that there is no inconsistency in rejecting the stories out of hand and being εἰσεβής. Elsewhere, Lucian, for the most part, leaves it to the reader to draw his own conclusions about why the stories have been told, but in the *Iuppiter tragoedus*, Damis the Epicurean, the opponent of the notion of divine foresight, says, when his Stoic adversary appeals to the authority of Homer, that neither Homer nor any other poet is an accurate witness to the truth about the gods; their aim is to beguile their hearers and give them pleasure. Damis then runs through roughly the same set of stories showing the gods in an ill light as are to be found in the *De sacrificiis* and asks whether the Stoic is persuaded by them.<sup>21</sup> The conclusion to be drawn is that Lucian regards stories told by Homer and the other poets about the gods, to the extent that they portray the gods as petty and vindictive, as giving an inaccurate picture of the true nature of the divine. Since Lucian in the *De sacrificiis* dwells on what was arguably one of his abiding concerns, the misunderstanding that arises from taking Homer and the poets as a guide to the nature of the gods, there is reason to take the work seriously.

Further insight into Lucian's understanding of the nature of the gods may be sought in his *Demonax*. It is not so much a *Life* as a string of apophthegms that Demonax is supposed to have uttered.<sup>22</sup> Demonax lived in Athens and had pretensions to being a Cynic. Not much more can be confidently said about him, since Lucian has drawn so idealized a portrait of the man as to raise suspicions about the reliability of the picture. The *Life* perhaps tells us more about Lucian and his tastes than it does about Demonax. It is for that very reason potentially an important witness to Lucian's thinking and to the impression he wished to give to those who met him. Lucian's Demonax was no hard-line Cynic, but an eclectic who had a profound knowledge of all of the major philosophical schools; not only was he well versed in philosophy, but he also knew poetry and could quote it readily; he was besides an accomplished speaker and a man of great charm who left those who had encountered his reproofs cheerful and full of hope for the future (3–8). That he has a good deal in common with Lucian

21 *Iup. tr.* 39: ἀλλ', ὃ θανμάσιε, ποιητὴν μὲ ἀγαθὸν Ὅμηρον γενέσθαι πάντες σοι συνομολογήσουσιν, μάρτυρα δὲ ἀληθῆ περὶ τῶν τοιούτων οὔτε ἄλλον ποιητὴν οὐδένα· οὐ γὰρ ἀληθείας μέλει αὐτοῖς, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μέτροις τε κατὰδουσι καὶ ὅλως ἅπαντα ὑπὲρ τοῦ τερπνοῦ μηχανῶνται.

22 On the *Demonax*, see K. Funk, *Untersuchungen über die lucianische Vita Demonactis*, *Philologus*, Suppl. 10 (1907).

is suggested by his making the same jokes that sympathetic characters in Lucian make: Demonax mocks a magician who has boasted that he possesses incantations able to make someone give him whatever he wants by declaring that he is able by paying a baker to get her to give him bread (23); in the *Philopseudes* (15), Tychiades makes fun of the powers of a magician with the same joke. What Demonax has to say about matters to do with the gods is likely, accordingly, to represent a position to which Lucian was at least sympathetic, even if he did not endorse wholeheartedly. If Demonax's pronouncements coincide with positions that are advocated elsewhere in Lucian, there is a case for drawing the stronger inference that Demonax is in some measure Lucian's mouthpiece. Demonax's first pronouncement on the subject of religion were made, Lucian says, early in his career in Athens when his enemies accused him of never having been seen to perform a sacrifice and of not having been initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries, which was what Socrates, according to Lucian, was charged with by Anytos and Meletos. To the charge that he had not sacrificed to Athena, Demonax's defence was that he had not supposed she was in need of a sacrifice from him; as for the Mysteries, he had refrained from being initiated, since he would have been unable to refrain from revealing their existence, if they were harmful, to turn others away from them, and if they were beneficial, out of his concern for the well-being of humanity (11).<sup>23</sup>

Demonax's defence of his conduct leaves little room for doubt that he believes the gods are self-sufficient and so do not require sacrifice or offerings. That is, of course, the thesis of the *De sacrificiis*. It is advanced in one other work of Lucian, the *Charon*, where Solon asks Croesus whether he imagines that Apollo needs the gold bricks he (Croesus) has dedicated to him. When Croesus says he does, Solon replies that Croesus must suppose there is a great deal of poverty in heaven, if they should have to send for gold from Lydia.<sup>24</sup> There are grounds then for thinking that Demonax's views on the self-sufficiency of the divine are also those of Lucian.

There is much that is still a mystery about Lucian's understanding of the divine and of the way in which it operates in this world, but it can be argued that he subscribed to a basically Platonic view of the divine, that it was self-sufficient and all-good and all-giving. This is

23 Lucian *Demon*. 11: πρὸς μὲν γὰρ τὸ μὴ τεθυκέναι πώποτε τῇ Ἀθηνᾶ· μὴ θαυμάσητε, ἔφη, ὃ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, εἰ μὴ πρότερον αὐτῇ ἔθυσσα, οὐδὲ γὰρ δεῖσθαι αὐτὴν τῶν παρ' ἐμοῦ θυσιῶν ὑπελάμβανον.

24 Lucian *Charon* 12a: εἰπέ μοι, ὃ Κροῖσε, οἷτι γὰρ τι δεῖσθαι τῶν πλίνθων τούτων τὸν Πύθιον. 12b: πολλὴν μοι λέγεις, ὃ Κροῖσε, πενίαν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, εἰ ἐκ Λυδίας μεταστέλλεσθαι τὸ χρυσίον δεήσει αὐτοὺς, ἣν ἐπιθυμήσωσι.



not perhaps very surprising in a man of his age and condition. That said, it has immediately to be conceded that Lucian is not a full-blooded Platonist; he has a certain sympathy for Epicureanism or, at any rate, its ridding men of fear of the supernatural. He does not, in consequence, believe in the continued visible presence on earth of some categories of the dead as Platonists did.<sup>25</sup>

25 Lucian, *Alex.* 47, *Philops.* 29. The key Platonic text is *Phd.* 81c8–d4.

# THE GODS IN THE GREEK NOVEL

*Ken Dowden*

How important are gods to the Greek novel? And how much do the novels encourage the view that the gods are active in human affairs? In this chapter I consider the frequency with which named, and also unspecified, gods are mentioned and how essential they are to the action of the novel. I shall conclude that in many cases it is not enough simply to view them in terms of literary convention and that literary convention itself depends on some acceptance within the world of the novel of beliefs that would be held in the real world.

The range of narrative literature considered by specialists in the ancient novel has increased and diversified over the last twenty or so years. The more diverse the novel, the less that can be said in general about any single issue, 'gods in the novel' included. For this chapter, however, I revert to the so-called 'ideal novel', by which I mean the novels of Chariton, Xenophon, Achilles Tatius, Longus and Heliodorus. These form an unusually close-knit group of apparently very similar plots and often comparable tastes. It is unfashionable but not wholly irresponsible to speak of them as a genre. At the same time, they do themselves vary in character, and perhaps the divine is one area where they differ significantly. These are all imperial texts: the earliest, Chariton, must be mid to late first century AD,<sup>1</sup> and the latest, Heliodorus, could be anywhere between the 220s and the 350s.<sup>2</sup>

1 Cf. K. Dowden, 'A lengthy sentence: judging the prolixity of novels', in M. Paschalis et al. (eds), *The Greek and the Roman Novel: Parallel Readings = Ancient Narrative* Suppl. 8 (Groningen: Barkhuis and Groningen University Library, 2007), pp. 133–50 at 141–2.

2 For the dating of the novels see most recently J. N. Bremmer, 'The novel and the apocryphal Acts: place, time and readership', in H. Hofmann and M. Zimmerman (eds), *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel IX* (Groningen: Forsten, 1998), pp. 157–80 at 167–71; E. L. Bowie, 'The chronology of the earlier Greek novels since B. E. Perry: revisions and precisions', *Ancient Narrative 2* (2002), pp. 47–63.

My own view, on the basis of some of his divine language, is that he is somewhere in the 330–360 range.<sup>3</sup>

### TAKING A COUNT OF THE GODS

Gods appear and resonate at various levels in the texture and thought-world of the novel. We should start with some sense of the variety of perspectives from which they can be viewed:

- *Gods in the text.* The gods are utterly *specific*: they bear names and have statues; *or* they are a dimly perceived, *amorphous plurality* or *collective singularity* that underlies the sense and meaning of the action.
- *Gods and causation.* The narrator's sense of the divine is only a mask for the author manipulating the necessity of the plot;<sup>4</sup> *or* he helps his audience to an understanding of a world in fact ordained by forces beyond us.<sup>5</sup>
- *Reading the gods.* Academic readers are literary specialists alert to intertextuality and to the hermeneutic puzzles that writers set for readers; *or* they are actually interested in religious worlds and sentiments and are content to see these worlds reflected in a meaningful way in these novels.

Amidst all this, we need some solid ground to stand on and it is my aim to provide this ground here, employing what may seem a very crude approach, but one that is certainly in some sense factual: I have *counted* the number of references to specific gods in these novels. I have also counted the references to god, *theos* (singular), and gods, *theoi* (plural). This is a task made possible by the excellent Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) site and helped by its new lemmatized search engine.<sup>6</sup> To these counts, I have applied the word-count of the novels

3 K. Dowden, 'Pouvoir divin, discours humain chez Héliodore', in B. Pouderon and J. Peigney (eds), *Discours et débats dans l'ancien roman* (Lyon: Maison de L'Orient et de la Méditerranée, 2006), pp. 249–61.

4 J. R. Morgan, introduction to his translation of Heliodorus, in B. P. Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 350–1; cf. 'authoritative sanction (from the gods, or Providence, or the author himself – which in a novel is the same thing)', J. R. Morgan, 'A sense of the ending: the conclusion of Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*', *TAPhA* 119 (1989), pp. 299–320 at 303.

5 K. Dowden, 'Heliodoros: serious intentions', *CQ* 46 (1996), pp. 267–85.

6 TLG at [www.tlg.uci.edu](http://www.tlg.uci.edu).

and, resulting from that, I have generated the frequency of mention of each of these items per 100,000 words (rather a large number to avoid using tiresome decimal places).<sup>7</sup>

Gods are cited for any number of reasons and it will be important presently to look in more detail at particular clusters. At the same time, the figures are in a reasonable sense objective and show the penetration of the novel by divinities in general and by particular divinities specifically. I had originally intended also to include Antonius Diogenes, but it looks as though Bishop Photius' summary has, interestingly, wiped out every mention of any pagan god. As for Iamblichus, his fragments are too few for many conclusions.

### GENRE GODS

It is at this point that the range of gods discussed needs to be moderated to the purpose at hand. This chapter is concerned not just with gods but with religion. Thus gods without a relevant religious dimension are not my concern here. That is why, before we proceed, I need briefly to explain why I have largely set aside Eros, Pan and the nymphs.

The distribution of these gods may be seen in Table 18.1. For Eros, I have distinguished the god *Eros* from the passion *eros* simply by accepting the capitalization in the TLG resource. In the case of the nymphs, I have identified all examples that refers to mythic nymphs and not to *nymphai*, 'brides'; this again corresponds to the TLG capitalization. Just as in the case of other gods, I have not counted words arguably derived from the god-name (e.g. the mysterious *Paneion* in Heliodorus 10.4.1).

It is well known that Eros is not strictly the object of worship – with very few exceptions, notably at Thespiai where he gained a statue by Praxiteles.<sup>8</sup> He is, rather, a literary and artistic genre figure (apart from some cosmogonical aspects<sup>9</sup>). That is not to say that gods such as Aphrodite cannot be used as genre figures in the novel, but she also constitutes a divinity that is genuinely worshipped within Greek

7 For how I obtained the word-count, see Dowden, 'Lengthy sentence', pp. 134–5.

8 L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 625–6; F. Graf, 'Der Kult des Eros in Thespiai', in H. Görgemanns et al., *Plutarch: Dialog über die Liebe* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), pp. 191–207, and his clear and concise article s.v. Eros (1), in *Brills New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes (Brill Online, accessed May 2008), [www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=bnp\\_e401810](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=bnp_e401810).

9 J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 8, 16.

Table 18.1 Mentions per 100,000 words of Eros, Pan and the nymphs

|        | All | Chariton | Xenophon | Achilles | Longus | Heliodorus |
|--------|-----|----------|----------|----------|--------|------------|
| Eros   | 40  | 49       | 91       | 55       | 91     | 5          |
| Pan    | 30  | 0        | 0        | 21       | 247    | 0          |
| Nymphs | 36  | 6        | 0        | 0        | 333    | 0          |

religion and is so presented.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Chariton's Kallirhoe goes into a temple and prays to her (3.2.12), even if on occasion he can treat Aphrodite as a matter of literary convention (τὴν Ἀφροδίτην τὴν δεῖξασάν μὲ σοι καὶ τὸν Ἔρωτα τὸν νυμφαγωγόν, 'Aphrodite who showed me to you and Eros who leads the bride', 3.2.5).

Pan and the nymphs share something of the character of Eros: they are essential to the decor and generic effect of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*.<sup>11</sup> They belong aesthetically in a painting, as is proper where the novel itself purports to illustrate a painting (*Proem*). However, in this case they also contribute to a religious sense in the novel as a whole that combines with the use of Dionysos in ways that tempted Chalk and Merkelbach, as we will see presently (p. 365). Even though it might seem that they satisfy the criterion of being worshipped in the text, they are still in that context generic: these are gods such as are worshipped by country folk and by their literary projection and sanitization, pastoral folk. Thus, however much they contribute to the religious sense of the novel, they are not reflecting the immediate religious world of their readers. They are a matter of ambience.

## INTERPRETING THE COUNT OF THE GODS

The frequencies for the remaining gods and god-words are then as in Table 18.2. It will be seen that there is no particular interest in the Olympian gods as a set, only in select individuals amongst them. Isis behaves in this context in the same way as an Olympian. Mithras, on the other hand, does not appear at all. Sarapis is mentioned twice, by Achilles; Osiris once, by Heliodorus.

On the other hand novels are typically preponderantly interested in particular gods. Chariton privileges Aphrodite, Xenophon Isis and Artemis, Achilles Artemis and Aphrodite, and Longus Dionysos.

10 V. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 4 (Liège: CIERGA, 1994); G. Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre: figures d'Aphrodite en Grèce ancienne* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 18 (Liège: CIERGA, 2007).

11 The references to Pan in Achilles occur exclusively in 8.6 and 8.13, in connection with the *aition* for the panpipes in the temple of Artemis that will test the chastity of the heroine, Leukippe.

Table 18.2 Mentions per 100,000 words of gods and 'the gods'

|           | All | Chariton | Xenophon | Achilles | Longus | Heliodorus |
|-----------|-----|----------|----------|----------|--------|------------|
| θεοί      | 151 | 95       | 103      | 72       | 111    | 235        |
| θεός      | 98  | 83       | 273      | 129      | 40     | 66         |
| Aphrodite | 53  | 143      | 24       | 81       | 15     | 12         |
| Dionysos  | 30  | 9        | 0        | 29       | 131    | 22         |
| Artemis   | 28  | 11       | 42       | 79       | 0      | 12         |
| Zeus      | 22  | 17       | 0        | 55       | 25     | 8          |
| Isis      | 12  | 0        | 55       | 5        | 0      | 14         |
| Apollo    | 10  | 0        | 6        | 10       | 10     | 16         |
| Hermes    | 6   | 0        | 0        | 5        | 5      | 11         |
| Poseidon  | 4   | 3        | 0        | 7        | 0      | 5          |
| Demeter   | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0        | 5      | 1          |
| Hera      | 1   | 0        | 6        | 2        | 0      | 0          |
| Osiris    | 1   | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0      | 1          |
| Sarapis   | 1   | 0        | 0        | 2        | 0      | 0          |
| Mithras   | 0   | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0      | 0          |

Heliodorus, by contrast, seems distinctively uninterested in individual named gods. These facts relate loosely to theories which were once proposed for the novel by Reinhold Merkelbach: if the novels were, as he claimed and now no one believes, mystery texts, then Xenophon had been an Isis text, and Longus was a Dionysos text (as Henry Chalk also believed).<sup>12</sup> Merkelbach's other suggestions are, however, not supported by this analysis.

How much does it mean that god-names play a predominant role in this or that novel, or that novelists as a whole speak a good deal more of the god or gods? Perhaps we will say that Artemis only figures so much in Achilles' story because of the grand closing episode which takes up a large part of the last two books: the denouement moves from courtroom to the religious zone as an embassy to Artemis arrives, led (as it turns out) by the heroine's father; and, unknown to all, the heroine has taken refuge with the goddess. There follows a grand scene of chastity tests and then the Happy End. This is all the virtuoso plotting of an author who revels in melodrama and will deploy any last motive force in the environment of the ancient city to that effect. Of the 33 namings of Artemis in Achilles, 30 are in books 7 and 8. Add to that the 'generic' nature of his references to Aphrodite<sup>13</sup> and it will

12 R. Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike* (Munich: Beck, 1962), and *Die Hirten des Dionysos: die Dionysos-Mysterien der römischen Kaiserzeit und der bukolische Roman des Longus* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1988); H. H. O. Chalk, 'Eros and the Lesbian pastorals of Longus', *JHS* 80 (1960), pp. 32–51.

13 For instance, 20 per cent (7/34) of the references to Aphrodite are in 2.37–8, the comparison of homosexual and heterosexual love, without, it must be said, much religious sense.

be seen that in a religious sense, his work is practically godless, which corresponds to how most readers – from Photius onwards – have seen him.

Equally, when an ancient novelist speaks of ‘the god’, he may often mean no more than the god he has just named (rather than ‘God’). Unspecified gods are most common in the genitive. Of the 53 references in the genitive singular, 13 (10 of them in the hands of Achilles) refer clearly to Eros or sex, 9 to Apollo or another specific oracular god, 4 to Helios, and 7 to some other particular god. After that, in the miscellany, there are two commonplace insincere references to the hand of god in the speeches of the hateful Thersandros and his friends in Achilles (7.10.1, 7.11.8), three pious but conventional references to the direction of events by god, or a god, in Chariton (1.1.6) and Xenophon (3.2.6, 5.1.5), and two in Heliodorus to god granting his assent to the turn of events (1.22.6 in the mouth of Charikleia to create a particular impression, and 7.5.4 in the mouth of a by now pious Thyamis).

This view dovetails nicely with literary approaches that choose to see the divine as a level of decor rather than of content. The authors are opportunist, they exploit religion, and so do their characters according to the situations in which they find themselves.

Yet piety is a delicate thing and the understanding of the subscription of the ancient world to its religious systems is perhaps not best served by the imposition of modern intellectual liberalism. Whatever use Achilles makes of the religious finale, it needs to find a place in contemporary religious sentiment. And whatever the consequences of Achilles’ choice to focalize his story through a morally less than perfect hero, the heroine glimpsed by that hero is – despite his efforts – chaste, and is so recognized by the religious apparatus. The hero’s whole melodramatic appeal to the goddess at 8.2, self-consciously *τραγῳδῶν* (‘acting tragic’, 8.1 *fin.*), would be pointless but for the varied levels of subscription to the religion by the readership and the, perhaps less educated or more conventional, internal audience. Achilles did not have to end with Artemis – he could have ended with an orgy if he had preferred. Instead, he chose to write, within an emerging genre, a work that strained at the boundaries of chastity, decency and religion, showing the dependency of titillation on a clear set of values.

Similarly, when ‘the god’ is referred to as such after he or she has been named, this is perhaps more than simply a divine equivalent of a Polybian *ὁ προειρημένος ἀνὴρ* (‘the man we have mentioned’). To mention a status is to conjure it up, as for instance in the case of ‘the king’ or ‘the queen’: these are a good deal more than just ‘he’ or ‘she’.

In some mouths this may be reverential; in others it may be more formal; but it is scarcely empty.

Thus there is at least a case that the crude counting, and classification, of instances where gods are mentioned serves some purpose and indicates something about the religiosity of the novel, at however minimal a level.

### THE ACTIONS OF THE GODS

What do these gods do, other than decorate the novel? Is there, for instance, justice in the world and is there a sense in things which is due to the hand of some superior being or beings? It is a convention in much grand literature that there should be. But not all literature can be like the epic, stripping off the mist that clouds human vision and showing us directly the gods that are always in action. Tragedy is already nervous about confronting gods directly, 'outing' them as it were, and it tends to exile them to the special registers of prologue and epilogue. Even then we will not see Zeus, perhaps because the ultimate source of planning cannot by its nature be made visible – as Phineus discovered to his cost.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the narratives that we encounter do not show gods themselves in action but may be shaped so as to encourage or discourage a *reading* that perceives the hand of God. And the primary responsibility for that perception lies in a sense with the reader, though some authors encourage it more than others: we perceive the hand of God more readily in the text of Herodotus than in that of Thucydides. Meanwhile, by the time of Chariton, attitudes to the literal existence of the named gods may have adjusted in many circles, particularly those educated ones that had had to wrestle with philosophy in its post-Platonic forms. This perhaps places an even greater burden on the reader to discern any discourse about the divine, something which in some sense is certainly a feature of the novel, or seems justified by the novel, as is tellingly developed in a recent paper by Tim Whitmarsh.<sup>15</sup> However, at this later stage at least, the prevalence of the named gods is not generally the form in which we should expect the sense of the gods to be developed. It may only tell us about conventional piety and the institutions of the continuing *poleis*.

14 K. Dowden, *Zeus* (London: Routledge 2006), e.g. pp. 92–5, 98.

15 T. Whitmarsh, 'Belief in fiction: religious and narrative conviction in the Greek novel', in J. R. Morgan and I. D. Repath (eds), *Where the Truth Lies: Lies and Metafiction in Ancient Narrative* [= *Ancient Narrative Suppl.*] (Groningen: Barkhuis and Groningen University Library, forthcoming). I am grateful to the author for letting me see this paper.



So the figure of Artemis in Achilles is a prominent dimension in the polis of Ephesos, to whom appropriate gestures and rhetoric may be addressed and about whom appropriate sentiments may be entertained. We do not generate the sense that anyone in the novel is an Artemis devotee, certainly not Kleitophon, though it is possibly meaningful that Leukippe has sought refuge in that sanctuary. As for Longus, it is at least a possible view that Dionysos figures as the link to a countryside onto which the urban writer projects a para-civic sense of cult, revolving as it must for the denizens of that world around Pan and the nymphs.

The role of Isis in Xenophon is, however, more integral to the management of the plot. The initial, indeed prime, driver for the plot is the oracle issued to the heroes' parents by Apollo of Kolophon (1.6.2), which promises a pattern of travail and then ultimate salvation by Isis. Without going to the lengths of Merkelbach's hypothesis, it is at least clear that the experience of the novel is being formatted in the same way as the mysteries formatted it. This does not make it a mystery novel but rather identifies a way of viewing human life overall,<sup>16</sup> one which does provide an important place for the divine and complies with a basic piety that accepts that gods run the world, something which is not an adventurous speculation but an obvious minimum standard of belief in a society more religious than our own.

In this world, prayers are addressed to divinities when the weak human is in distress. The iconic moment is of course the prayer of Lucius, the ass, to the moon, to Isis (as he supposes), at Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.2. Closest to it in Xenophon is the prayer of Antheia to Isis of Memphis at 4.3, the very same divinity to whom Kalasiris delivers his last prayer at 7.8. If persons in need, in a novel, address prayers, it is hard not to consider the question: *are prayers answered?* Every religious person must believe so. But few are blind to the obvious evidence that this is not so. This may even be the core question for religiosity altogether. It is therefore worth knowing what answers a reader of the novel takes away from its text.

### RAPID RESPONSE

The clearest proof that the gods answer prayers is also, *ipso facto*, the least convincing. So, in Longus, we find Daphnis' desperate prayer

16 K. Dowden, 'Greek novel and the ritual of life: an exercise in taxonomy', in S. J. Harrison and M. Paschalis (eds), *Metaphor and the Ancient Novel = Ancient Narrative* Suppl. 4 (Groningen: Barkhuis and Groningen University Library, 2005), pp. 23–35.

to the nymphs after Chloë has been abducted by the Methymneans (2.23). We do not have to wait long: the nymphs promptly appear to Daphnis in a dream and tell him they have referred the matter to Pan, and Pan wastes no time in producing the evidence of his attention to prayer in the plot, with various miraculous interventions and even a personal appearance to the general in a dream (2.27). It is hard to gauge what lesson the reader takes home from the *fausse naïveté* of this episode or indeed of the novel. It follows some conventions of pagan religious thought, if in miraculous, pastoral and toy mode.

A more overpowering example, however, comes at Xenophon 4.2, where Habrokomes is suffering the inconvenience of crucifixion: looking towards the Sun, he now prays, presumably to Sarapis: 'O you most philanthropic of gods, (you) whose domain is Egypt'. The god, Xenophon tells us, pities him and a wind arises blowing the cross over and causing it to fall into the Nile, where Habrokomes emerges wholly unharmed. This narrative convenience, largely despised by modern readers, certainly asserts the hand of God, but rather as a Christian miracle would. The combination of this episode and his saving from the flames immediately following constitutes a θαῦμα ('marvel') for the internal audience and evidence that he μέλει θεοῖς ('is a concern to the gods', i.e. is looked after by them). Miracles, however, belong in an exceptional register and require, or provoke, a more credulous subscription to the hand of God. At the same time this is distant from the beliefs even of the faithful in the normal interaction of God with human life. Miracles happen in a different zone, typically the written zone, and, though accepted, are perhaps accepted as pagan Greeks accepted the historicity of their earlier mythology. It may indeed have happened, but at a different time or place, and you need not expect it to happen in quite that way in *your* experience.

Somewhere here belongs the extraordinary scene in Heliodorus (5.12–16) where Kalasiris ransoms Charikleia from the merchant, his host Nausikles. Charikleia has whispered to Kalasiris that, if they need money, she has her necklace and its jewels with her. But Kalasiris does not wish to reveal this openly to Nausikles and so conducts a charade whose rules rest on which theory of the hand of God you entertain. 'The sage', says Kalasiris, 'is never needy', sounding like a Stoic preaching on self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*), but about to give this sentiment alarmingly concrete exemplification. Nausikles is amused by the game and banters that he will only πιστεύειν ('have faith') that Kalasiris can suddenly become wealthy καθάπερ ἐκ μηχανῆς ('as though from the *machina*' in the theatre) if he pays the ransom. Faith is clearly at risk in this environment, marked as it is by the implausibilities of the *deus ex machina*.

But, dissonantly, Nausikles is actually about to conduct *χαριστήρια τοῖς θεοῖς* ('thanksgiving to the gods'), a genuine – if not necessarily very deep – form of religion. Contradiction is in the air. Kalasiris, Nausikles now adds, may join him for the ritual, which turns out to be 'publicly funded' (*δημοτελῇ γὰρ ἡὐτόρπιστο τὴν θυσίαν*). Charikleia – and now we get her perspective on religion – had only agreed to go in order to pray for the safety of Theagenes; so for her it is real religion and the communication channels to God are opened by the ceremony. The ceremony is conducted at the temple of Hermes, the only one in the novels,<sup>17</sup> whom Nausikles perceives as patron of his profession as merchant and privileges relative to other (named) gods. This is not what is important for Kalasiris, and I suspect that Kalasiris and Heliodorus both know that the individual gods are not really what is at issue at all.

Kalasiris now inspects the entrails, as though he were Kalchas. Most of those around, for instance Nausikles, will expect routinely favourable omens. This is the nature of the civic theology, as Varro transmits it to us. But the scene is also the setting for a deception, where Kalasiris is the master conjurer at a ceremony (aptly for his trickery too) of Hermes. Kalasiris, then, in rather fraudulent guise, reads the entrails. However, Heliodorus tells us that he actually sees something *real* in the entrails – a mixture of joy and pain – and his expression shifts as he reads these signs, though perhaps only the reader notices. No sooner has he seen this than, reverting to showman, he pulls out a ring from the flames and claims that the gods put it there for the purpose of ransoming Charikleia.

At this point Heliodorus strikes up a magnificent ekphrasis, a sort of cadenza retarding the scene as we anticipate how Nausikles will read this deceitful turn of events. It is in fact not clear how Nausikles reads the scene. He is stated to be amazed by the unexpectedness of the event. He professes that he had not been serious about the ransom, but he will take the gift anyway, especially as it is at no cost to Kalasiris, because he is 'persuaded' that it has come from Hermes. Does he believe this? Or is he, in more agnostic mode, playing along with Kalasiris and 'asking no questions'? His sense of religion is either trivial or empty. But while the singing and dancing go on, Charikleia goes off to perform a private prayer: 'she prayed', writes Heliodorus

17 Hermes appears as the god who stands guard over sleep (Longus 4.34.3; Heliodorus 3.5.1), as a figure in mythology (Achilles 2.6.3, bis), as the god of the gymnasium with a hint of his cunning (Heliodorus 10.31.5), as the father of Homer in Egyptian Thebes (i.e. as Thoth) according to Kalasiris (Heliodorus 3.14.2), and otherwise in association with Nausikles, who effectively worships at the shrine of capitalism (Heliodorus 5.13.2; 5.15.2; 5.16.4 bis; 6.7.1).

with overwhelming simplicity, ‘that Theagenes might be saved and that he might be kept for her’.

Heliodorus is a very great author and the complex layers of belief inscribed in this scene, and the versatility of a Kalasiris responding on all levels, must surely arouse in the alert reader some sense of the complexity of religion itself. Public religion has a place and a validity, and indeed entrails can be read and divination is, at least within the frame of the novel, possible for the truly gifted. But the hand of God does not work quite in the way that Kalasiris tries to persuade Nausikles it does. It will work in fact by saving Theagenes for Charikleia, as it worked so long ago by placing the jewels in Charikleia’s possession. God is not a conjurer (ἄρα γόητα τὸν θεὸν οἶε εἶναι, ‘Do you consider, then, that God is a conjurer?’; Plato, *Republic* 380d) and nothing is so unexpected to God that it requires sudden intervention.

### THE LONG RUN

We thus arrive at a position close to that of Plutarch in the *De sera numinis vindicta*. Gods are about the long run. We may think our prayers have not been answered, but perhaps they are answered without our yet understanding that they have been. Xenophon’s understanding of the gods might seem fairly primitive. We have seen Habrokomes, when crucified earlier in book 4, pray to the most *philanthropos* of gods and receive a pretty immediate answer. But immediately following this, in a sort of matching prayer, Antheia prays to Isis, ‘greatest of gods’, stating how she is being taken to India/Ethiopia far from Habrokomes. She prays, much as Charikleia will later, to be saved and restored to a living Habrokomes, if with rather more melodramatic passion and rather less outright piety (4.3). Her prayer is, however, less direct in its effect than Habrokomes’. Xenophon has just slipped in the fact that she is currently near Hippothoos’s ληστήριον (his *Robbery*, i.e. ‘Robber’s den’). And sure enough she is, immediately following the prayer, seized by him as a way of ensuring that she is not taken completely off the stage to Ethiopia. As no outcome of the prayer is stated, we must assume – if it was not mere melodrama – that the intervention of Hippothoos is the means Isis has chosen to ensure Antheia is saved.<sup>18</sup> It is up to the reader to supply this reading,

18 There is a case for finding philosophical/religious aspects in Xenophon’s plot-management: cf. K. Dowden, ‘Novel ways of being philosophical, or a tale of two dogs and a phoenix’, in J. R. Morgan and M. Jones (eds), *Philosophical Presences in the Ancient Novel = Ancient Narrative Suppl.10* (Groningen: Barkhuis and Groningen University Library, 2007), pp. 137–50 at 139–44.

or understanding, of the longer-term methods of divinity, and one reader, Heliodorus, surely read it this way.

Heliodorus himself, according to tradition a Christian bishop, gives the greatest grounds amongst the Greek novelists for this type of reading, though few modern interpreters are inclined, whether by nature or by training, to exercise the opportunity. The episode of Thisbe in the Cave is a useful example.<sup>19</sup> Thyamis instructs Knemon to take Charikleia to the Cave (1.28), a place scarcely neutral in the religious and philosophical *imaginaire*. A little later, Theagenes laments her death and the role of the not-further-specified *daimon* (spirit/minor god, 2.1). We readers know, however, that she has been conveyed to a safe place, the Cave, and the divine has managed rather more thoughtfully than Theagenes supposes. Arrived in the Cave, Knemon and Theagenes encounter a woman's body and suppose it to be Charikleia (2.3); the reader is now tempted to follow this error and succumb to the associated failure of trust in God. Once more Theagenes laments an event that has been inflicted on them by the divine (ὦ συμφορᾷς θεηλάτου, 'alas for this god-instigated disaster', 2.4) and in this melodramatic mode he imagines that an Erinys has struck, that Charikleia's body is a shrine fallen silent, and finally he blames the *daimon* again. But it is a failure of recognition and Charikleia now reappears, though Theagenes is comically hard to persuade of her reality (2.5) – the Cave is indeed a place where truth is hard to perceive. The corpse now turns out to be Thisbe, so far only a character in a tale told by Knemon. This turn of events is for Knemon dumbfounding (2.5).

The unexpectedness of this event is expressed, amongst other ways, in theatrical terms. Charikleia asks how it can be reasonable that this should have happened and sees it as ἐκ μηχανῆς ('from the *machina*', 2.8); and Knemon speaks of Thisbe as bringing the Attic tragic stage to bear on him (2.11). This is all very romantic and learned, but it is also worth remembering that the Attic stage itself operates with an acceptance of a role of the gods that is generally beyond the capacity of characters to understand. It is at this point that I part company with a view most clearly expressed by John Morgan in the introduction to his translation: the work for him is not religious but religiose; and he holds that 'in a work of fiction Providence is only Plot in disguise'.<sup>20</sup> There is no clear answer to this position. It is undoubtedly true that a providence-driven plot is compelling and undermines the reader's disbelief. And religiosity (as opposed to religion), which is in the eye of the beholder, helps us, rather on the principle of Ockham's razor, to minimize the apparatus required for the understanding of the work.

<sup>19</sup> Dowden, 'Serious intentions', p. 273.

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, introduction, p. 350.

Yet the same conceptions could be applied to Sophocles, who surely cannot be saved merely by the biographical tradition from being a calculating religious constructor of compelling plots. The religious reading remains a possible reading of Heliodorus and it is supported by the hierarchy of understandings displayed by the characters of the novel, with the Ethiopian gymnosophists at the top, via Kalasiris – the man who received an oracle unbidden from the Pythia (2.26), and the man whose authority modern criticism has been attempting to challenge<sup>21</sup> – down to the Charikles of Delphi, and then on to the ordinary world of Knemon and Nausikles and Thisbe, and down, down finally to the almost insensate morality of criminals and barbarians.<sup>22</sup> It is supported also by the choice of religious vocabulary, so little inclined to rest on the powers of named gods, so much more inclined to see the operation of ‘the gods’ or, even more strikingly, ‘the superiors’ (οἱ κρείττονες) – a form of expression not much in evidence before Eusebius.<sup>23</sup>

## CONCLUSION

A vast amount more could be said about the gods in the Greek novel. The novels are very various in their religious scope and in the readings they encourage. They mostly have in common a tendency to see the hand of the divine rather than the specific actions of specific deities, which is perhaps what one would expect in educated writers of imperial times. Some give the impression of being more casual or distanced in their use of religion: Achilles knows what is bourgeois and correct, but comes across as rather exploiting the apparatus; Longus knows religion as a pastoral colour, but is so distanced from his characters that it is impossible to gauge whether there is any depth of engagement with religion there. Chariton and Xenophon are relatively pious, and Xenophon in particular may be more religious than is generally supposed. But it is Heliodorus’ text that has the best claim to offer a thought-out religious view of the world; and regardless of whether he actually held this view or expected to encourage us on the path to divine understanding, he all the same depicts what it would be like to tread such a path. A Kalasiran view of religion brings us quite close to Plutarch and to the piety of later Platonists. It is a dimension of religion that is difficult to gain from other sources and that, perhaps, is the principal value of the novel for the student of religion.

21 Starting from J. J. Winkler, ‘The mendacity of Kalasiris and the narrative strategy of Heliodorus’ *Aithiopika*, *YCS* 27 (1982), pp. 93–158.

22 Dowden, ‘Serious intentions’, pp. 280–3.

23 Dowden, ‘Pouvoir divin’, pp. 255–8.

# READING PAUSANIAS: CULTS OF THE GODS AND REPRESENTATION OF THE DIVINE

*Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge*

Over the past couple of decades Pausanias has become the centre of a minor academic industry, a point made recently by Glen Bowersock.<sup>1</sup> The growing scholarship in this area has taken Pausanias' profile seriously and his work at face value. One of the major trends has been the appreciation of Pausanias' work as a complex literary enterprise and not just as a databank to be plundered without taking into consideration the context of each piece of information, be it chronological or narratological. Such a flourishing interest in Pausanias' work has also been inspired by the increasing interest in the Greek world under Roman rule, the world to which Pausanias belonged, and the related question of what it meant to be Greek when power was held elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

Pausanias was a serious scholar and a tireless traveller. Maybe he can also be considered as 'dry, sober and pedantic', as a German

I would like to thank Jan Bremmer warmly for his invitation to this prestigious conference and Andrew Erskine for the wonderful hospitality of the University of Edinburgh. The argument presented here in English depends on a larger research project, which is published in French: *Retour à la source: Pausanias et la religion grecque* = *Kernos*, Suppl. 20 (Liège: CIERGA, 2008). The translations of Pausanias' text are taken from the Loeb edition by W. H. S. Jones (London, 1918–35) and slightly adapted to be more literal.

- 1 G. Bowersock, 'Artemidorus and the Second Sophistic', in B. Borg (ed.), *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), pp. 53–63 at 53. Many monographs, collective books and individual articles in journals have been published over the last twenty-five years, following Christian Habicht's Sather Classical Lectures, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998<sup>2</sup>), and the very useful introduction to the Italian edition of Pausanias by Domenico Musti in D. Musti and L. Beschi, *Pausania: Guida della Grecia. I: L'Attica* (Milan: Mondadori, 1982).
- 2 Cf. the well-balanced and lucid book of W. Hutton, *Describing Greece: Landscape and Literature in the Periegesis of Pausanias* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

scholar described him in 1890.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps he is almost ‘one of us’, as Snodgrass concluded in a wonderful paper on Pausanias and the Chest of Kypselos in 2001.<sup>4</sup> However true these identifications may be – and perhaps all are true – Pausanias had many problems to solve and many choices to make in order to transpose his vision and understanding of the material and cultural landscapes of Greece into a literary work. The *Periegesis* is the result of these choices and not a photographic image of what Greece was like at this time.<sup>5</sup> This is true for every piece and type of information. It is even truer as far as religion is concerned, especially since Pausanias still belongs to the system he describes. On this level, he is *not* one of us. Therefore, reading Pausanias in order to consider the question of Greek gods implies that we should take into account his own position on the matter, on the one hand, and the way he reports the many results of his visits on the spot, combining them with literary references, on the other hand. These points of view are not completely independent, since Pausanias presents himself as a pious man, who pays respect to the local religious traditions he refers to. Such an attitude has been understood as a literary affectation rooted in the intellectual praxis of the time.<sup>6</sup> I do not agree with such a statement and I follow William Hutton when he says that ‘literary effect is not necessarily the same as literary affectation’.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the gods and their local cults, Pausanias is an important literary source that enables us to understand the so-called local Greek pantheons, particularly when we are able to compare his testimony with the epigraphic evidence.<sup>8</sup> In this case, one of the main problems that needs to be thoroughly discussed is the chronological background of so much information. On the other hand, as far as the very concept of god in Greece is concerned, other questions – different from the

3 W. Gurlitt, *Über Pausanias: Untersuchungen* (Graz: Leuschner and Lubensky, 1890), p. 126 (‘mit den trockensten, nüchternen, pedantischen Pausanias’, tr. Snodgrass [here below], p. 128).

4 A. M. Snodgrass, ‘Pausanias and the Chest of Kypselos’, in S. Alcock et al. (eds), *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 127–41.

5 The huge bibliography on this subject has been exhaustively treated in Pirenne-Delforge, *Retour à la source*.

6 J. F. Gaertner, ‘Die Kultepiklesen und Kultaitia in Pausanias’ *Periegesis*, *Hermes* 134 (2006), pp. 471–87. A very different approach is that of J. Elsner, ‘Pausanias: a Greek pilgrim in the Roman world’, *Past and Present* 135 (1992), pp. 3–29, repr. in R. Osborne (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 260–85, with a *postscript* 2003, and in Alcock et al., *Pausanias: Travel and Memory*, pp. 3–20.

7 Hutton, *Describing Greece*, p. 11.

8 See different papers on Pausanias in V. Pirenne-Delforge (ed.), *Les panthéons des cités, des origines à la Périégèse de Pausanias = Kernos*, Suppl. 8 (Liège: CIERGA, 1998).



‘pantheonic’ reading though complementary to it – need to be asked of the *Periegesis*. The first question is: can we find a definition or definitions of what a god means to a Greek intellectual such as Pausanias, living and writing during the Roman period? The second question is: to what extent can his review of ‘all things Greek’ (πάντα τὰ Ἑλληνικά, 1.26.5) provide us with information on the point of view of his local informants on the same question of what a god is?

In order to present these questions, I shall limit myself to certain aspects only. First, if we agree that by defining a god, we are essentially speaking about status, I shall present the different places where Pausanias confronts divine and heroic ranks. Which interpretative tools does he use as regards divine or heroic status? Secondly, what happens with figures whose divinity is not a matter of discussion? What kind of mechanisms does Pausanias identify to explain the beginnings of a cult in a community? Answering each of these questions will provide some material for reflection on the Greek gods.

### ‘GODS BORN FROM HUMAN BEINGS’

In book 10, Pausanias describes Delphi in particular. In the sanctuary of Apollo, the paintings of Polygnotos in the *lesche* of the Knidians deserve special attention, and Pausanias takes a long time to describe the different scenes depicted on the walls. One of them is a complex image of the Underworld with many different figures. Some are epic and widely known, others are not, like the anonymous people carrying water in jars. ‘We inferred’, writes Pausanias, ‘that these people were among those who held the rites at Eleusis to be of no account. For the Greeks of an earlier period looked upon the Eleusinian Mysteries as being much higher than all other acts of piety, just as they honoured gods much more than heroes’ (10.31.11). Pausanias’ reverence for the Eleusinian Mysteries is featured throughout his work. Scholars have understood and studied such reverence for a long time.<sup>9</sup> However, the contrast made in this passage between honouring heroes and honouring the gods has not been assessed. In this text, Pausanias considers that the gods are the recipients of an early reverence, which therefore manifests a deeper and higher piety. It is interesting to highlight the contrast with heroes: Greek gods extend beyond space and time while heroes are rooted in the human condition.<sup>10</sup> But what about human

9 For example, J. Heer, *La personnalité de Pausanias* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979), pp. 132–4.

10 On the birth of the category of the heroes see now J. N. Bremmer, ‘The rise of the hero cult and the New Simonides’, *ZPE* 158 (2007), pp. 15–26.

beings becoming gods in the *Periegesis*? Pausanias' criteria are still the same: people of ancient times were more pious and righteous; accordingly, some extraordinary stories of divinization are believable in so far as they are placed in remote periods of time. In one place, Pausanias explains his point of view on this matter: a metamorphosis is believable if it concerns, for example, an ancient king of Arcadia, such as Lykaon. Pausanias says in book 8:

For the men of those days, because of their righteousness and piety, were guests of the gods, eating at the same board; the good were openly honoured by the gods, and those who did wrong were openly visited with their wrath. In those days gods were even born from human beings, gods who down to the present day have honours paid to them – Aristaeus, Britomartis of Crete, Herakles the son of Alkmene, Amphiaraios the son of Oikles, as well as Pollux and Castor [ . . . ]. But at the present time, when sin has grown to such a height and has been spreading over every land and every city, no longer are gods born from human beings, except in the flattering words addressed to the power, and the wrath of the gods is reserved until unjust people have departed to the next world.<sup>11</sup>

We cannot completely exclude that such self-presentation is, at least partly, a literary posturing dictated by the wish to criticize the imperial cult of his time. However, the connection of divine status, with honours paid to these figures born from human beings in a bygone age, is striking in the *Periegesis* as a whole, and this is what I would like to show. In some of the cities he visits, Pausanias points to the place where the divine status of these human figures has been recognized. The Greek expression used by Pausanias is always θεὸν νομίζειν. It has long been recognized how difficult it is to translate this expression.<sup>12</sup> It implies

11 Paus. 8.2.4–5 (translation more literally adapted from W. H. S. Jones): καὶ ἐμὲ γε ὁ λόγος οὗτος πείθει, λέγεται δὲ ὑπὸ Ἀρκάδων ἐκ παλαιοῦ, καὶ τὸ εἰκὸς αὐτῷ πρόσσεστιν. οἱ γὰρ δὴ τότε ἀνθρώποι ξένοι καὶ ὅμοι τράπεζοι θεοῖς ἦσαν ὑπὸ δικαιοσύνης καὶ εὐσεβείας, καὶ σφισιν ἐναργῶς ἀπὸ πάντων παρὰ τῶν θεῶν τιμὴ τε οὖσιν ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἀδικήσασιν ὡσαύτως ἡ ὀργή, ἐπεὶ τοὶ καὶ θεοὶ τότε ἐγίνοντο ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, οἱ γέροντες καὶ ἐς τότε ἔτι ἔχουσιν ὡς Ἀρισταῖος καὶ Βριτόμαρτις ἡ Κρητική καὶ Ἡρακλῆς ὁ Ἀλκμήνης καὶ Ἀμφιάραος ὁ Οὐκλέους, ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτοῖς Πολυδεύκης τε καὶ Κάστωρ . . . ἐπ' ἐμοῦ δὲ – κακία γὰρ δὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἠὔξετο καὶ γῆν τε ἐπενέμετο πᾶσαν καὶ πόλεις πάσας – οὕτε θεὸς ἐγίνετο οὐδεὶς ἔτι ἐξ ἀνθρώπου, πλὴν ὅσον λόγῳ καὶ κολακείᾳ τὸ ὑπερέχον, καὶ ἀδικοῖς τὸ μῆνιμα τὸ ἐκ τῶν θεῶν ὀψέ τε καὶ ἀπελθοῦσιν ἐνθὲν ἀπόκειται. On this passage, see Hutton, *Describing Greece*, p. 305–11, and, with a slightly different point of view, Pirenne-Delforge, *Retour à la source*, pp. 67–72 and 333–41.

12 Cf. W. Fahr, *Θεοὺς νομίζειν: Zum Problem der Anfänge des Atheismus bei den Griechen* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1970), pp. 160–2, and *passim*.

both the affirmation of a status and the customary honours paid in a community. I will translate it by an inelegant but efficient periphrasis: 'to consider and honour as a god'.

Herakles first appears in this context.<sup>13</sup> Describing the Stoa Poikile at Athens, Pausanias declares that the people of Marathon associated Herakles with the depiction of the battle because, according to the text: 'The Marathonians, according to their own account, were the first to consider and honour Herakles as a god.'<sup>14</sup> This is confirmed in Marathon itself, where Pausanias says: 'The Marathonians worship . . . Herakles, saying that they were the first among the Greeks to consider and honour him as a god.'<sup>15</sup> The same applies to the inhabitants of Oropos as regards Amphiaraios. According to Pausanias: 'The Oropians were the first to consider and honour Amphiaraios as a god, followed by all the Greeks.'<sup>16</sup> In this case, an epiphany of Amphiaraios is associated with this veneration. People who were cured of their diseases had to throw a coin into a spring. This is where, according to the Oropians, Amphiaraios rose up as a god, after having been swallowed by the earth with his chariot.

Two different passages concern another figure 'born from human beings and who became a goddess'. The Megarians are the only Greeks who say that the corpse of Ino was cast up on their coast and buried in their city. According to Pausanias, they said 'that they were the first to name her Leukothea and that every year they offer her sacrifice'.<sup>17</sup> In Messenia, the inhabitants of Korope tell a similar but slightly different story. They considered the place on the shore where Ino rose from the sea as sacred, once she was already considered and honoured as a goddess, and called her Leukothea instead of Ino.<sup>18</sup> The difference is the epiphanic element in the Koropean version of the story, as in the case of Amphiaraios. Pausanias gives no comment about the Megarian version but we may infer that the presence of a tomb, pointing to a dead body, does not support the local claim, in so far as the visitor explicitly refutes a similar appropriation of Iphigeneia

13 For the status of Herakles see also Stafford, this volume, Chapter 12.

14 Paus. 1.15.3: Μαραθωνίοις γάρ, ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν, Ἡρακλῆς ἐνομήσθη θεὸς πρῶτοις.

15 Paus. 1.32.4: σέβονται δὲ οἱ Μαραθῶνιοι . . . Ἡρακλέα, φάμενοι πρῶτοις Ἑλλήνων σφίσιν Ἡρακλέα θεὸν νομισθῆναι.

16 Paus. 1.34.2: θεὸν δὲ Ἀμφιάραον πρῶτοις Ὠρωπίοις κατέστη νομίζειν, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ οἱ πάντες Ἕλληνας ἡγῆνται.

17 Paus. 1.42.7: μόνοι δὲ εἰσιν Ἕλληνων Μεγαρεῖς οἱ λέγοντες τὸν νεκρὸν τῆς Ἰνου ἐς τὰ παραθαλάσσια σφίσιν ἐκτεσεῖν τῆς χώρας [ . . . ] καὶ Λευκοθέαν τε ὀνομασθῆναι παρὰ σφίσι πρῶτοις φασὶν αὐτὴν καὶ θυσίαν ἄγειν ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος.

18 Paus. 4.34.4: τὰ δὲ τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην ἐστὶν ἐπὶ θαλάσῃ χωρίον, ὃ Ἰνοῦς ἱερὸν εἶναι νομίζουσιν· ἐπαναβῆναι γὰρ ἐνταῦθα ἐκ θαλάσσης φασὶν αὐτὴν θεὸν τε ἤδη νομιζομένην καὶ Λευκοθέαν καλουμένην ἀντὶ Ἰνου.

by the Megarians some lines further on. Amphiaraios and Ino, just like Herakles, are gods born from human beings, but their human flesh has disappeared. Pausanias' judgement on the Dioskouroi story is more difficult to evaluate. In Sparta, he describes the tomb of Castor, over which a *hieron* has been constructed: 'For they say that it was not before the fortieth year after the fight with Idas and Lynceus that the sons of Tyndareos were considered and honoured as gods.'<sup>19</sup> Perhaps this calculation in time was connected to one of the numerous epiphanies of the Tyndarides to which Pausanias himself sometimes refers (3.16.2–3).

In the Arcadian book, we find all these figures, except for Ino, present in the list of the gods born from human beings (8.2.4–5, quoted above). One exception is Asklepios, who rather unexpectedly does not appear in this list. The treatment of Asklepios' divine status by Pausanias in his second book is highly significant. We first learn that the Athenians associated their worship of Asklepios with Epidaurios: it was after he arrived from this place that he was considered and honoured as a god in their own city.<sup>20</sup> But Pausanias' discussion is centred on the necessity of arguing against a transformation of Asklepios' status. Pausanias insists on the fact that he was considered and honoured as a god ἐξ ἀρχῆς, 'from the beginning'. Several signs show that the god did not owe his divine reputation to events over time. This is mainly proved by his interpretation of a Homeric passage: the fact that Machaon is said to be the 'human son of Asklepios' implies that he is the 'son of a god'. Therefore, Asklepios is not a θεὸς ἐξ ἀνθρώπου, a 'god born from a human being'.

The case of Trophonios in Lebadeia, who is also absent from the list in the eighth book, is more complicated. In the Boeotian book, Pausanias says when visiting Lebadeia that he is convinced that Trophonios is the son of Apollo and not of Erginos, 'as does everyone who has gone to Trophonios to inquire of his oracle'.<sup>21</sup> Pausanias' oracular experience is at the core of his conviction. Trophonios is a god and the quality of his oracle proves it. However, in the first book, explaining the transformation of Amphiaraios into a god, he writes that some other humans from the past receive divine honours (θεῶν τιμαί) in Greece. Some of them even get a whole city of their own, such as Protesilaos in Elaeus or Trophonios in Lebadeia (1.34.2). Therefore,

19 Paus. 3.13.1: ἐστὶ δὲ καὶ Κάστορος μνῆμα, ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἱερὸν πεποιήται· τεσσαρακοστῷ γὰρ ὕστερον ἔτει τῆς μάχης τῆς πρὸς Ἴδαν καὶ Λυγκέα θεοὺς τοὺς Τυνδάρεω παῖδας καὶ οὐ πρότερον νομισθῆναι φασί.

20 Paus. 2.26.8: . . . καὶ θεὸν ἀπ' ἐκείνου φασὶν Ἀσκληπιὸν σφισι νομισθῆναι.

21 Paus. 9.37.5: λέγεται δὲ ὁ Τροφώνιος Ἀπόλλωνος εἶναι καὶ οὐκ Ἐργίνου· καὶ ἐγὼ τε πείθομαι καὶ ὅστις παρὰ Τροφώνιον ἦλθε δὴ μαντευσόμενος.

the comparison with Asklepios needs to be qualified: Trophonios is the son of Apollo, just like Asklepios, but Asklepios is a god from the beginning, while Trophonios has become a full god in the course of time by the divine honours received in Lebadeia, and through the reputation of an oracle unworthy of Apollonian paternity.

The divine status attributed to some human beings of old is a complex theological problem in a religious system without any central authority or dogmatic profile. Here and there in the *Periegesis*, Pausanias refers to the different stages for recognizing a divinity: worship in a local community and thereafter the force of a reputation that spreads progressively. He confirms that the duration of the veneration and the vitality of the cult are essential criteria, providing the basis of divine ranking for some humans of old.

By chance, this point of view is supported by the Greek version of a *senatus consultum* preserved in an inscription from Oropos, the favourite city of Amphiaraos referred to above. The inscription dates from the year 73 BC and refers to a dispute concerning the taxation of the land in Amphiaraos' sanctuary. In fulfilment of a vow, Sulla had once given a considerable amount of land, which was not to be violated, to Amphiaraos' sanctuary. Some years later, after Sulla's death, the *publicani* (tax-farmers) attempted to collect taxes from this area and were informed by the Oropians of Sulla's decisions. The *publicani* did not honour the arrangement. An envoy was sent to Rome and the representative of the *publicani* defended their opinion, arguing that the exemptions granted by Sulla referred only to those lands that were sacred to a god and that Amphiaraos was not a god.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the Roman Senate confirmed Sulla's decision, calling to mind the decree of 86 and the *senatus consultum* of 80, which ratified the former decree. In these two former documents, Amphiaraos' name is systematically defined by the word *theos*. We no longer possess the Latin version of the *senatus consultum* but we may suppose that the Greek version was a faithful translation of the original. The point is that the argument does not mention the Greek word *heros* to identify Amphiaraos' status. For Latin speakers such a notion did not make sense.

In his treatise *De natura deorum*, Cicero refers to the situation in philosophical discussion concerning rank within the supra-human world. The passage reads:

22 I.Oropos 308 (= Syll.<sup>3</sup>, 747). Cf. R. K. Sherk, *Roman Documents from the Greek East: Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), pp. 133–8, no. 23; E. Famerie, *Les documents officiels romains de la République et du principat d'Auguste: Documents épigraphiques et sources littéraires (212a–14p)*, Paris, no. 48 (forthcoming).

If Ino is to be deemed divine, under the title of Leukothea in Greece and Matuta at Rome, because she is the daughter of Cadmus, . . . are [others] to be not counted in the list of the gods?<sup>23</sup> . . . Or if we allow Ino, are we going to make Amphiaraios and Trophonios divine? The Roman tax-farmers, finding that lands in Boeotia belonging to the immortal gods were exempted by the censor's regulations, used to maintain that nobody was immortal who had once upon a time been a human being.<sup>24</sup>

In Pausanias' language, this means that θεοὶ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, 'gods born from human beings', do not exist. On a more general level, it means that the theological problem had very concrete implications. However, it is difficult to follow Albert Schachter when he writes that 'Amphiaraios seems to have been the only hero who was legally declared a god for tax purposes.'<sup>25</sup> For the Oropians, their god was a full god. Such evidence explains why Pausanias carefully pleaded for an original divine status to be attributed to Asklepios. Two centuries earlier, the case was not evident for another healing god such as Amphiaraios.

Additional information is given in two other stories told by Pausanias. The first refers to an Olympian athlete called Kleomedes of Astypalaia, who lived in the fifth century BC. During a boxing match, he killed his adversary and was deprived of his prize by the umpires. He became mad through grief and returned home to Astypalaia. There, he pulled down the pillar that held up the roof of a school and killed the children who were attending classes. Pelted with stones by the citizens, he took refuge in the sanctuary of Athena, hiding in a chest where the Astypalaians, breaking into it, were unable to find him, dead or alive. When questioning the oracle of Delphi to find out what had happened to him, the Astypalaians were told that Kleomedes was the last hero and to be honoured with sacrifices as being no longer a mortal. Therefore, Pausanias concludes: 'From this time the Astypalaians have paid honours to Kleomedes as to a hero.'<sup>26</sup>

23 Cic., *Nat. D.* 3.48 (tr. H. Rackham, Loeb, 1912).

24 *Ibid.* 3.49: *Nostrī quidem publicani cum essent agri in Boeotia deorum immortalium excepti lege censoria negabant immortalis esse ullos qui aliquando homines fuissent.* Cf. Cic., *Div.* 1.40 (88): *Amphiaräum autem sic honoravit fama Graeciae, deus ut habetur, atque ut ab eius solo, in quo est humatus, oracula peterentur*, 'As for Amphiaraios, his reputation in Greece was such that he was honoured as a god, and oracular responses were sought in the place where he was buried' (tr. W. A. Falconer, Loeb, 1923).

25 Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*, vol. I = *BICS*, Suppl. 38.1 (London, 1981), p. 25.

26 Paus. 6.9.6–8: . . . 8. τοῦτοις χρήσαι τὴν Πυθίαν φασίν ὕστατος ἡρώων Κλεομήδης Ἀστυπάλαιεύς, ὃν θυσίαις τιμᾶθ' ὥς οὐκέτι θνητὸν εἶναι. Κλεομήδῃ μὲν οὖν Ἀστυπάλαιεϊ ἀπὸ τούτου τιμᾶς [τε] ὥς ἤρῳ. Cf. H. W. Parke and D. E. W.

A more famous athlete, Theagenes of Thasos, won no less than one thousand four hundred crowns, according to Pausanias. When he died, one of his enemies insulted his statue every night until he died in turn, killed by the falling statue. The son of the dead man prosecuted the statue for murder. When Theagenes was condemned, the Thasians threw his statue into the sea. In the course of time, the earth yielded no crops to the Thasians and the oracle of Delphi instructed them to retrieve the exiles. Among them, Theagenes' statue had to be recovered, a problem resolved by chance during a fishing expedition. The statue was then erected in its original position and the Thasians established sacrifices to Theagenes as if he were a god.<sup>27</sup> Pausanias states in a conclusion on this subject that he knew of many other places, among both Greeks and barbarians, where images of Theagenes were erected. 'He cures diseases and receives honours from the natives.'<sup>28</sup> Since Kleomedes and Theagenes were contemporaries, the time factor is not relevant in their respective cases. What is at stake is the geographical extent of Theagenes' protection and benevolence, which is essential for the recognition of this figure as divine. Kleomedes forever remains an Astypalaian hero, whose excessive deeds must be contained and controlled by an appropriate cult within his own community.

Accordingly, the status of all these supra-human figures poses a theological problem, to which scholars like Cicero or Plutarch proposed philosophical solutions. Pausanias' position is different, as far as his main interest focuses on local practice, even expanded by some information acquired in a library. He echoes local claims, such as 'we were the first of the Greeks to consider and honour Herakles, Amphiaraos, and so on, as a god', or some Delphic oracles that specify the status of an angry dead person and the cult he deserves. Except in the case of Asklepios, Pausanias does not very often qualify such a statement. Nevertheless, the authoritative statement of the Arcadian book implies that, for him, a long-lived local tradition and great vitality in worship are important factors that attest to the divine dimension of a hero. The geographical extension of a cult is another criterion, be it a multiplication of places of cult, as for Asklepios and Theagenes, or the foreign dimension of the audience, as in the case of Trophonios and perhaps Amphiaraos. Geographical extent, however,

Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle. II: The Oracular Responses* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), pp. 38–9, no. 88.

27 Paus. 6.11.8: νομίζουσιν ἅτε θεῶν θύειν. Cf. J. Pouilloux, 'Théogènes de Thasos . . . quarante ans après', *BCH* 118 (1994), pp. 199–206 at 204.

28 Paus. 6.11.9: πολλὰ καὶ ἑτέρωθεν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι οἶδα καὶ παρὰ βαρβάροις ἀγάλματα ἰδουμένα Θεαγένους καὶ νοσήματά τε αὐτὸν ἰόμενον καὶ ἔχοντα παρὰ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων τιμὰς.

is not enough without the time element, as attested by his scepticism about Theagenes.<sup>29</sup>

### DEITIES WITHOUT ANY DISCUSSION

Local claims are also present in the appropriation of figures whose divinity is not a matter of discussion. The same objective is at stake: to be the first community to have worshipped a divinity. The example of Eileithyia in the first and third book of the *Periegesis* is significant. In book 1, Pausanias is in Athens, near the Prytaneion. A temple of Eileithyia had been built very close by. According to Pausanias, Eileithyia was coming to Delos from the Hyperborean land when the goddess Leto was pregnant and ready to give birth to the twins Artemis and Apollo. According to the local tradition, Delian people taught the others Eileithyia's name.<sup>30</sup> Sacrifices and a very old hymn were the components of her worship on the island. Afterwards, Pausanias refers to the Cretan tradition of Eileithyia's birth (the child of Hera) in Amnisos, near Knossos. Finally, he gives some information on the Athenian iconographic type of the goddess' statues. Two of them are Cretan, consecrated by Phaedra. The oldest was brought by Erysichthon from Delos.

In this passage concerning the cult of Eileithyia, Delos is the place where the divine identification was made. The goddess' name came from this place, where she appeared in a remote past and where she had been honoured for a long time. Such a description is a narrative transposition of the expression θεὸν νομίζειν, as confirmed by another passage in book 3. Visiting the Spartan sanctuary of Eileithyia, Pausanias refers to the local tradition of the cult's origin. The sanctuary was built and Eileithyia was 'considered and honoured as a god' after an oracle was given in Delphi. Presumably, Apollo was asked: 'To which god or goddess is it necessary to sacrifice in that circumstance?', and the god's answer was a name and the recommendation for worshipping a specific goddess whose honours had to be inaugurated in the community.

In his passage on the Athenian Eileithyia, Pausanias might well have been influenced by Herodotus. First of all, he gives more credit

29 Compare *IG XI* 2.1109, l. 8–17 = *LSCG* 83: . . . ὄντος ἀρχαίου τοῦ μαντείου καὶ προτετιμημένου διὰ προγόνων, παραγινομένων δὲ καὶ ξένων πλείονων ἐπὶ τὸ χρηστήριον, 'because of the antiquity of the oracle and its high reputation enjoyed for generations and also because it is visited by foreigners in large number', tr. adapted from E. Stavrianoupoulou, *Kernos*, Suppl. 16 (Liège: CIERGA, 2006), pp. 137–38.

30 Paus. 1.18.5: τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους παρ' αὐτῶν φασὶ τῆς Εἰλειθυίας μαθεῖν τὸ ὄνομα.



to Herodotus than to the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, since the historian seems to associate Eileithyia with the Hyperborean land and not with Mount Olympos as the hymn does.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, the ὄνομα – that is, the name of Eileithyia which the Delian people taught to the rest of the world – could refer to Herodotus' second book, where he discusses the origin of Greek gods. Within the undetermined divine world, the Pelasgoi worshipped generic θεοί. Afterwards, under Egyptian influence, Greeks gave names to the gods and the divine world acquired its Greek configuration (Herod. 2.50). Without addressing the huge problem of the Herodotean *ounomata*,<sup>32</sup> divine 'names', it seems that the authoritative representation of the origins of Greek religion delivered by Herodotus might have been present when Pausanias wrote that Delians taught 'the others' Eileithyia's name. The expression clearly implies cult-spreading based on 'theonymic' knowledge. Such spreading was also assumed by the Delphic oracle, as confirmed by the Spartan tradition of Eileithyia's cult. The expression θεὸν νομίζειν for a real goddess is unique in the *Periegesis*, where it usually refers to a change of status. The application of the expression to Eileithyia clearly shows, however, that the mechanisms of ranking or cult inauguration may be described by this single expression.

### SEARCHING FOR SOME 'THEOLOGY'

If we try to search for some 'theology' in ancient Greek religion, that is, definitions concerning its gods, we can find it in passages such as these, whether they concern the early cult for Eileithyia, the divinity of Asklepios or the impressive deification of Herakles. It would be interesting to know what kind of arguments the defenders of the Oropians put forward to convince the Roman Senate that Amphiaraios was a god. Although we are given no information, we can perhaps surmise that a long-lasting veneration based on an epiphany and on the quality of his oracular and therapeutic expertise were part of it.

For Pausanias, gods are present from the beginning, ἐξ ἀρχῆς, even though their identification by name in a specific community is a matter of time or circumstance. Other gods, 'born from human beings', θεοὶ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, justify their rank by an old veneration, connecting them

31 *H.h. Apoll.* 97–101; Hdt. 4.35.6.

32 For example: A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: Commentary 1–98* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 203–5; W. Burkert, 'Herodot über die Namen der Götter: Polytheismus als historisches Problem', *Museum Helveticum* 43 (1985), pp. 121–32; T. Harrison, *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 251–64; J. Gould, *Myth, Ritual Memory, and Exchange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 359–77 ('Herodotus and Religion', 1996) at 374–5.

to bygone days, when gods and men could meet and interact. As for the others – that is to say, all those local heroes deeply rooted in the human condition, and the powerful people of the time who were honoured as though they were gods – they have another ranking. Another passage in book 8 confirms such a point of view. The text is well known and has often been commented upon. Pausanias refers to a theogonic story told by the Arcadians. Rhea had given birth to Poseidon and hidden him among some lambs. The goddess declared to Kronos that she had given birth to a horse and gave him a foal to swallow instead of the child, just as she did later to save Zeus himself. Pausanias says:

When I began to write my synthesis,<sup>33</sup> I was inclined to count these stories as foolishness, but on getting as far as Arcadia I grew to hold a more thoughtful view of them, which is this. In the days of old, those Greeks who were considered wise spoke their sayings not straight out but in riddles, and so the stories about Kronos I conjectured to be one sort of Greek wisdom. In matters of divinity, therefore, I shall adopt the received tradition.<sup>34</sup>

Speaking of foolishness, Pausanias points to a well-defined category: ‘these *logoi*’ are stories referring to gods. The pious Pausanias, just as Xenophanes many centuries earlier, does not subscribe literally to such a conception of the divine. But the confrontation with ancestral Arcadian traditions changes his opinion regarding the understanding of these stories. I do not have time to go deeper into the interpretation of such an ‘Arcadian conversion’ here – I have done so elsewhere – but this statement shows the different ways in which Pausanias refers to Greek *logoi*. On the one hand, there is fiction (μυθολογήματα), which means stories referring to human actions including the heroic sphere. As Pausanias says, ‘Those who like to listen to the miraculous are themselves apt to add to the marvel, and so they ruin truth by mixing it with falsehood’ (8.2.7). On the other hand, there is the register of the enigmatic, which means hidden discourse about the divine. As far as fiction is concerned, several levels and various criteria of plausibility

33 For this meaning of συγγραφή, see Pirenne-Delforge, *Retour à la source*, pp. 23–40.

34 Paus. 8.8.2–3 (translation adapted from W. H. S. Jones): τούτοις Ἑλλήνων ἐγὼ τοῖς λόγοις ἀρχόμενος μὲν τῆς συγγραφῆς εὐηθείας ἔνεμον πλέον, ἐς δὲ τὰ Ἀρκάδων προελθὺς πρόνοιαν περὶ αὐτῶν τοιάνδε ἐλάμβανον· Ἑλλήνων τοὺς νομιζομένους σοφοὺς δι’ αἰνιγμάτων πάλαι καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ εὐθέως λέγειν τοὺς λόγους, καὶ τὰ εἰρημένα οὖν ἐς τὸν Κρόνον σοφίαν εἶναι τινα εἵκαζον Ἑλλήνων. τῶν μὲν δὴ ἐς τὸ θεῖον <ἀν>ηκόντων τοῖς εἰρημένοις χρῆσόμεθα. <ἀν>ηκόντων is a correction proposed by Habicht, *Pausanias’ Guide*, pp. 156–7 n. 65.

are applicable. As far as gods are concerned, Pausanias suspends judgement: 'In matters of divinity, therefore, I shall adopt the received tradition.'<sup>35</sup>

Let us return to Oropos to conclude. Amphiaraios was a problem for the *publicani* who saw him as a man of the past. For the Oropians, the tradition of his epiphany and the quality of his therapeutic expertise were old enough to justify the most favourable ranking. For Cicero, Amphiaraios was a good object 'to think about' in a philosophical discussion about figures that were absent from Rome's divine background. For Pausanias, he belonged to the second rank: a θεός ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, due to long-lasting veneration. As Amphiaraios was a god, even of a second rank, Pausanias did not comment upon the Oropian stories about him: he adopted the received tradition and transmitted this to his readers without any critical statement. Conversely, in Troezen, in front of the place where Semele was thought to have been brought out of the Underworld by Dionysos, Pausanias decisively states that he cannot even bring himself to believe that Semele died at all, seeing that she was the wife of Zeus.<sup>36</sup> We may suppose that what was at stake was not Semele herself but the rank of Dionysos: a god ἐξ ἀρχῆς, a god of the first level, whose mother did not even die and whose wife became a goddess as soon as he married her.

In Pausanias' *Periegesis*, we find gods (θεοί), gods born from human beings (θεοὶ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων), heroes of old or heroes of yesterday. We also find the gods of his time, born from flattery. All these figures offer a broad range of possibilities for reflection on divinity and supra-human status. My focus was Pausanias, but I do believe that his insider/outsider perspective gives us a lot of material to question afresh some of the main theological issues of the Greek system. Regarding religion, the *Periegesis* is much more than a convenient databank of Greek cults and sanctuaries.

35 Paus. 8.8.3. This statement deserves close analysis. I address the problem elsewhere: Pirenne-Delforge, *Retour à la source*, pp. 71–2 and 'Under which conditions did the Greeks "believe" in their myths? The religious criteria of adherence', in Chr. Walde, U. Dill (eds), *Antike Mythen, Medien, Transformationen, Konstruktionen. Festschriften für Fritz Graf* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 38–54.

36 Paus. 2.31.2: ἐγὼ δὲ Σεμέλην μὲν οὐδὲ ἀποθανεῖν ἀρχὴν πείθομαι Διὸς γε οὖσαν γυναικα.

# KRONOS AND THE TITANS AS POWERFUL ANCESTORS: A CASE STUDY OF THE GREEK GODS IN LATER MAGICAL SPELLS

*Christopher A. Faraone*

There are some obvious and therefore less interesting ways in which the Greek gods show up in the magical texts of later antiquity. Sometimes the process involves shrinking a large-scale communal sanctuary down to the size of a personal shrine that can be placed in a house or even on top of a table. Thus Eitrem showed long ago how a series of divination spells in the Greek magical handbooks invoke Apollo by traditional cult names and require various implements and images associated with his oracular sites in Delphi, Klaros and Didyma.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, one spell instructs us how to assemble a miniature temple for the god, replete with a small Delphic tripod and a laurel-bedecked cult statue.<sup>2</sup> In addition to expropriating and miniaturizing Apollo's shrine, the hymns embedded in the recipe equate the god himself with Helios, the Jewish angels Gabriel and Michael, and the Egyptian sun god Re.<sup>3</sup> Another unremarkable kind of survival is when chthonic deities like Hermes or Persephone continue to be invoked in cursing rituals that have clearly evolved from much earlier Greek *defixiones*, as in this archetype of a popular binding spell reconstructed from a recipe in *PGM* IV 335–406 and five lead curse-tablets, all of which were found in Egypt and date to the fourth century AD:<sup>4</sup>

1 S. Eitrem, *Orakel und Mysterien am Ausgang der Antike* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947), pp. 47–52.

2 *PGM* III 282–409; for discussion see C. A. Faraone, 'The collapse of celestial and chthonic realms in a late antique "Apollonian invocation" (*PGM* I 262–347)', in R. Boustan and A. Y. Reed (eds), *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 217–19.

3 Faraone, 'The collapse of celestial and chthonic realms', pp. 224–31.

4 For text, see D. G. Martinez, *A Greek Love Charm from Egypt*, P. Mich. XVI (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 116–17 and 131–2. For a full discussion of the invocations, see C. A. Faraone, 'The ethnic origins of a Roman-era *Philtrokatadesmos* (*PGM* IV 296–434)', in P. Mirecki and M. Meyer (eds), *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 319–43.

I deposit (παρακατατίθεμαι) this binding charm (κατάδεσμος) with you, chthonic gods, Plouton *uesemigadôn* and Kore Persephone Ereschigal and Adonis also called *barbaritha*, and Hermes Katachthonios Thoth *phôkensepseu arektathou misonktaik* and mighty Anubis *psêriphtha*, who holds the keys of the gates to Hades, and chthonic demons, gods, men and women who suffered untimely death, youths and maidens.

This is not a case of miniaturizing a public cult, but rather a case of the survival of an originally Greek binding ritual of a private sort: both the verb παρακατατίθεμαι and the designation of the text as a κατάδεσμος make this point clear, as does the lead medium and the instructions to place the tablet in the grave of someone whose death was untimely or violent.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, the arrangement of the names of the gods on this tablet provide us with a kind of stratigraphy of its historical evolution as it was taken up by Greek-speaking magicians in the eastern Mediterranean:

... Pluto *uesemigadôn*,  
and Kore Persephone Ereschigal,  
and Adonis also called *barbaritha*  
and Hermes Katachthonios Thoth *phôkensepseu arektathou*  
*misonktaik*,  
and mighty Anubis *psêriphtha*, who holds the keys of the gates  
to Hades

In the first three cases, a Semitic name (Ereshkigal) or a Semitic-sounding *vox magica* has been added *after* the Greek name.<sup>6</sup> In the fourth case, the name Thoth and a series of Egyptian-sounding magical words<sup>7</sup> have similarly been placed after the name of the

5 For an overview of this kind of spell see C. A. Faraone, 'The agonistic context of early Greek binding spells', in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 3–32.

6 According to the very helpful 'Glossary' in W. Brashear, 'The Greek magical papyri: an introduction and survey; annotated bibliography', *ANRW* II 18.5 (1995), pp. 3576–603, the word *uesemigadôn* is Hebrew for 'That is: his name is great', Ereschigal is the Babylonian goddess of the Underworld, and *barbaritha* is possibly Aramaic for 'Arba has come'; or Hebrew for 'Art thou Arba'.

7 The same three words appear, for example, at *PGM* III (in a heavily Egyptian-influenced spell) and at *LXVII* 11–12 (as an epithet of Hermes Thoth; see L. Koenen, 'Formular eines Liebeszaubers (*PGM* LXVII)', *ZPE* 8 [1971], pp. 199–206 at 205). A variation of the first word (*phôkenseps*) has been explained as Egyptian for 'der mit dem Schwert Geschmückte'. See Martinez, *A Greek Love Charm*, p. 43.

Greek god Hermes, a feature which suggests strongly that this spell originally named only the four Greek chthonic deities: Plouton, Kore, Adonis and Hermes, and that at some later time the non-Greek names or words were added, as a kind of epithet or gloss of the original names.<sup>8</sup> Note, also, that in the fifth position, the name Anubis stands alone without any Greek equivalent, followed by an Egyptian sounding *vox magica* and mention of his possession of the keys of the Underworld, another traditional Egyptian motif.<sup>9</sup> His name is not, like the others, placed here as an Egyptian equivalent of a Greek god, but rather as a completely new addition at the end of the Greek sequence, another strategy of acculturation that is observable in other cases where earlier Greek texts are brought into Roman Egypt and then extended to make them relevant to their new cultural setting.<sup>10</sup> Here, then, we find Greek gods persisting in their traditional chthonic roles in a binding formula, inscribed on a lead tablet, which – aside from these foreign additions – has not changed much in seven centuries.

In addition to the miniaturization of public cult and survival of private ones, we find a third easily illustrated process by which in Christian eyes the pagan celestial gods become the demons of late antiquity. It is not surprising to find, for example, an early Byzantine papyrus amulet that equates or connects the evil scorpion with both Artemis and Aphrodite (*PGM 2*, sixth century AD):

|                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| †την θύραν, την Ἀφροδίτην    | †The gate, the Aphrodite, |
| φροδίτην, ροδίτην, οδίτην,   | phrodite, rodite, odite,  |
| δίτην, ίτην, την, ην, Ὠρ Ὠρ, | dite, ite, te, e, Hor Hor |
| φωρ φωρ, Ἰάω Σαβαώθ, Ἀδονέ   | phor phor, Iao Sabaoth,   |
|                              | Adonai                    |

8 Adonis may, however, be a special case. His worship was borrowed by the Greeks from the Levant in the archaic period (Sappho mentions him) and his name derives from Semitic *Adôn*, 'Lord'. The Aramaic word that follows his name is not, moreover, simply placed after Adonis' name, as in the other cases in this passage, but rather it is linked with the Greek words *ὁ καί*, which is a regular Greek formula for adding a *supernomen* to the god's name, as Martinez, *A Greek Love Charm*, p. 41 shows.

9 According to Brashear, 'The Greek magical papyri', *ad loc.*, *psériphtha* may be Egyptian for 'son of Re-Ptah'. See Martinez, *A Greek Love Charm*, pp. 41–5, for all of the Egyptian motifs here.

10 The best example is the case of a traditional fifth-century hymn (the so-called Erythraean Paean) that shows up in Roman Egypt, with an additional fifth stanza that explicitly mentions the Nile and Egypt. See O. Weinreich, *Ausgewählte Schriften II* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1973), pp. 379–89 and (for a recent summation of all the pertinent bibliography) L. Käppel, *Paian: Studien zur Geschichte einer Gattung* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1992), pp. 189–206.

δένο σε, σκορπίε, Ἀρτε[μ]ήσιε·      I bind you, scorpion,  
Artemisian

ἀπάλλαξον τὸν οἶκον τοῦτον      Deliver this house from  
ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ ἐρπετοῦ      every evil creeper  
[καί] πράγματος, ταχύ, ταχύ.      [and] thing, quickly quickly.

ὁ ἅγιος Φωκάς ὧδέ ἐστιν.      Saint Phokas is here.

This amulet is comprised of four independent texts, each of which starts at the beginning of a new line in the papyrus (I have illustrated these divisions above by inserting horizontal spaces in the text): (1) Aphrodite's name is made to disappear one letter at a time (a common magical action on amulets against the names of demons);<sup>11</sup> (2) a one-line binding spell directed against the scorpion, which is said to be 'Artemisian'; (3) a three-line plea for deliverance 'from every evil creeping thing' ;and then (4) a one-line declaration: 'Saint Phokas is here'. The final boast about the presence of St Phokas is itself a common inscription on Christian house doors, the plea for deliverance is often found alone on amulets, and the first-person binding formula ('I bind you, scorpion . . .') is typical of binding spells cast against human rivals.<sup>12</sup> The power of this papyrus amulet is, of course, robustly over-determined, since in theory any of its four parts could operate independently as an effective phylactery. It is significant for this chapter, however, that in the first two sections the scorpion is equated or connected with two different pagan Greek goddesses.

These triple phenomena, then, of shrinking, survival and demonization, are all fairly well known and provide a good background for examining a puzzling series of later magical spells that cannot be explained so easily. These incantations focus in different ways on the history and fate of Kronos and the Titans, gods who according to ancient Greek theogonic traditions were either defeated and imprisoned in Tartarus for eternity by Zeus or turned into soot by his thunderbolts. In what follows I argue that in the eyes of later magicians the special power of Kronos and the Titans evolves, because they were thought to be living still below the earth, and that therefore they assume a role similar to

11 The disappearing name is also surrounded by the names or symbols of powerful helper gods: a cross precedes the first and full iteration of Aphrodite's name and the names of Horus and Jahweh follow. For more detailed discussion, see C. A. Faraone, *Disappearing Speech Acts: Text and Image on Greek Curative Amulets*.

12 For St Phokas, see L. Robert, 'Échec au mal', *Hellenica* 13 (1965), pp. 266–7.

a human ghost or Underworld demon, supernatural beings who also dwelt beneath the earth and were the traditional allies of sorcerers. There are, in fact, two scenes from archaic poetry in which the goddess Hera invokes Kronos and/or the Titans as powerful ancestors, who oversee powerful oaths and can punish evildoers, much the same as the angry dead ancestors of humans. We shall see, however, that later magical texts deploy Kronos and the Titans somewhat differently: all are invoked in binding spells to restrain or send away anger, and Kronos alone appears in a divination spell that closely recalls contemporary necromantic spells. In what follows, then, I shall show how the defeated Kronos and the Titans evolve quite early on from the ‘bad guys’ of theogonic poetry to become chthonic agents of anger control and necromancy, and how their theogonic prehistory plays into their later roles. As we shall see, this is neither a case of the survival of a very old private Greek ritual, nor the later demonization of a formerly Olympian god like Aphrodite, but rather a case of the slow evolution of these defeated gods into powerful Underworld ancestors, who act very much like the ghosts of humans.

Let us begin with a Greek ostrakon from Egypt dating to the late imperial period (*PGM* O[strakon] 1):

O Kronos, you who restrain the *thumos* of all mortals (ὁ κατέχων τὸν θυμὸν ὅλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων), restrain the *thumos* (κάτεχε τὸν θυμὸν) of Horos whom Maria bore, do not allow him to speak with Hatros, whom Taeses bore, because I adjure you by the finger of the god in order that he (i.e. Horos) not open his mouth to him (i.e. Hatros), because he (i.e. Horos) belongs to Kronos and is subject to Kronos (Κρόνου πέλει καὶ Κρόνῳ ὑπόκειται). Do not allow him (i.e., Horos) to speak with him (i.e. Hatros), neither night or day, not even for an hour.

Here, the speaker of the charm invokes Kronos in hymn-like fashion as the god who restrains the *thumos* of all mortals.<sup>13</sup> It is fairly clear that this ostrakon belongs to the tradition of Greek binding spells discussed earlier, and even the echo between the participle κατέχων and the imperative κάτεχε can be paralleled in a similar plea

13 The author of this charm adds another layer of supernatural machinery when he threatens Kronos by adjuring him ‘by the finger of God’, probably a reference to Yahweh, who presumably will punish Kronos if he does not help the petitioner. See Preisendanz, *PGM*, *ad loc.* For Yahweh as the pre-eminent addressee of such exorcistic prayers, see R. Kotansky, ‘Greek exorcistic amulets’, in M. Meyer and P. Mirecki (eds), *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 243–78.



to Hermes Katochos on an Athenian *defixio* of classical date (*DTA* 88): ‘Ο Hermes Restrainer, restrain the wits, the tongue of Kallias!’ (Ερμῇ κάτοχε κάτοχε φρένας, γλῶτταν τοῦ Καλλίου).

But how is Kronos attracted to this tradition of binding magic and why is he identified here as a specialist in anger control? There is, first off, some ambiguity about the precise meaning of the word *thumos* here and in some of the other spells discussed below. In a late Roman prose text like this we would assume that *thumos* means ‘anger’ and that Hatros designed or used this ostrakon to bind the anger and the (presumably abusive) speech of Horos towards Hatros. There are, however, magical spells of this date in which *thumos* (as well as *orgē*) carries an earlier, more poetic meaning of ‘spirit’ or ‘sexual power’, parallels which suggest that a jealous third person designed or used this ostrakon to bind the sexual power and the (presumably seductive) speech of Horos towards Hatros.<sup>14</sup> Since the word *thumos* is also connected with virility and was even used in archaic times to refer to the phallus (see *LSJ Supp.* s.v. 4), one cannot help but wonder whether Kronos’ special power in this spell derives from his notorious emasculation of his father Ouranos.

The Titans as a collectivity appear in a similar role in a short invocation preserved among the so-called ‘Orphic Hymns’ (*Orphic Hymn* 37):<sup>15</sup>

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| Τιτῆνες, Γαίης τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,   | (1) |
| ἡμετέρων πρόγονοι πατέρων, γαίης ὑπένερχθεν  |     |
| οἴκοις Ταρταρίοισι μυχῶι χθονὸς ἐνναίοντες,  |     |
| ἀρχαὶ καὶ πηγαὶ πάντων θνητῶν πολυμόχθων,    | 4   |
| εἰναλίῳν πτηνῶν τε καὶ οἱ χθόνα ναιετάουσιν· |     |
| ἐξ ὑμέων γὰρ πᾶσα πέλει γενεὰ κατὰ κόσμον.   |     |
| ὑμᾶς κικλήσκω μῆνιν χαλεπὴν ἀποπέμπειν,      |     |
| εἴ τις ἀπὸ χθονίων προγόνων οἴκοις ἐπελάσθη. | 8   |

Titans, famous children of Earth and Sky,  
ancestors of our fathers, beneath the ground  
inhabiting Tartarian houses in the inner chamber of the earth,  
beginnings and springs of all much-suffering mortals,  
and of sea-dwellers and winged ones, and those who inhabit the  
earth,

14 C. A. Faraone, ‘*Thumos* as masculine ideal and social pathology in ancient Greek magical spells’, in S. Braund and G. Most (eds), *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 144–62.

15 I give the text of G. Ricciardelli, *Inni orfici* (Milan: Mondadori, 2000), *ad loc.*

because out of you every race comes throughout the universe.  
 I call on you to send away grievous rage,  
 if any one from the chthonian ancestors draws near the houses.

The date of any individual Orphic Hymn is, of course, difficult to pinpoint, but there is a general consensus that the collection transmitted to us from antiquity was assembled sometime in the third century AD perhaps in western Anatolia. Like the Egyptian ostrakon, this prayer seems designed to protect the speaker(s) from the anger of another person. There is, however, confusion in the final verse about the precise identity of the individual who approaches the houses. Since the adjective *χθόνιος* regularly refers to infernal divinities and not the dead in Hades, it would appear that the attacker is one of the Titans themselves.<sup>16</sup> If this is so, then it is quite odd that the speaker of the hymn is not more explicit. The phrase *τις ἀπὸ χθονίων προγόνων* can, however, mean ‘anyone descended from the chthonian ancestors’, that is, not the Titans themselves, but any of the humans who had descended from their family line since their imprisonment in Tartarus.<sup>17</sup> Since the Titans are the ancestors of all humans and gods, this attacker could be anyone, and since he has *mênis*, the usual designation for *supernatural* anger, it is best to understand that he is either a god born from a later generation or a dead human who has returned to haunt them in the form of a ghost.

There is a similar ambiguity regarding the identification of the *oikoi*, ‘houses’, mentioned in the last line. Suggestions range from the houses of the Titans previously described in line 3 to special initiatory buildings in Asia Minor, where an earlier generation of scholars imagined the hymns to be performed.<sup>18</sup> Given the vagueness of the Greek, none of these theories can be laid to rest, but it seems most likely that the *oikoi* here belong in one way or another to the people singing the hymn, who invoke their ancestors (the Titans) to send a supernatural

16 I would like to thank Robert Parker for this insight and the reference to A.-F. Morand, *Études sur les Hymnes Orphiques* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 216–17.

17 See Ricciardelli, *Inni orfici*, p. 383. The usual interpretation is that the Titans are asked to send away the anger of one of their own, and indeed we find something like it in the Orphic Hymn to Korybas, who is bidden (39.9) *χαλεπήν δ' ἀποπέμπεο μῆνιν*. Here, however, the use of the middle imperative makes it clear that Korybas is asked to send away his own anger. For Titans and anthropogony see now J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible, and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 88–93.

18 For example, A. Athanassakis, *The Orphic Hymns: Text, Translation and Notes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 53, translates ‘if some earthly ancestor of mine stormed your houses’. See Ricciardelli, *Inni orfici*, p. 384, for a full discussion of earlier views.

antagonist away from their homes.<sup>19</sup> I suggest, moreover, that this text may even have been used as an amulet of sorts to protect houses from ghostly or demonic appearances. Indeed, in the penultimate line the speaker uses a verb sometimes found in amuletic texts: *apopempein*, ‘to send away’. The prayer to Kronos on the ostrakon could have also served as an amulet, which protected the owner from harm by restraining the *thumos* of an enemy or a rival. Here the power of the Titans to send away the attacker presumably stems from their seniority in the Underworld over all of their descendants. It is important to note, however, that whereas Kronos on the ostrakon restrains human *thumos*, here the Titans protect against supernatural *ménis*.

We find another interesting parallel to these two texts in a set of lead tablets found in a third-century AD mass grave in Amathous on Cyprus. After an invocation of four fairly well-preserved hexameters, the text devolves into prose:<sup>20</sup>

δαίμονες οἱ κατὰ γῆν καὶ δαίμονες οἵτινές ἐστε  
καὶ πατέρες πατέρων καὶ μητέρες ἀντιάνειροι  
οἵτινες ἐνθάδε κείσθε καὶ οἵτινες ἐνθάδε {δε} κάθεσθε  
θυμὸν ἀπὸ κραδῆς πολυκηδέα πρόσθε λαβόντες,

παραλάβετε τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος τὸν θυμὸν τ[ὸν]  
πρὸς ἐμὲ ἔχει τὸν Σοτηριανὸν τὸν καὶ Λίμβαρον, καὶ τὴν [ὀργή]ν  
καὶ ἀφέλεσθε αὐτοῦ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἀλκὴν, [ποιήσ]ατε αὐτὸν  
ψυχρὸν καὶ ἄφωνον καὶ ἀπνεύμονον {ψυχ- [ρ]ὸν} εἰς ἐμὲ τὸν  
Σοτηριανὸν τὸν καὶ Λίμβαρον.

*Daimones* under the earth, *daimones* whoever you are,  
both fathers of fathers and mothers equal to their husbands,  
whoever lie here and whoever sit here,  
because you formerly took much-grievous *thumos* from the heart,

take away the *thumos* of Ariston which he has towards me,  
Sotêrianos (also known as Limbaros), and the *orgê*, take away  
his power and might from him, and make him cold, speechless,  
breathless, towards me, Sotêrianos (also known as Limbaros).

19 For the problems of attacking ghosts, see the instructions in a Cyrenean inscription and other evidence in C. A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 81–4.

20 DT 22. When we have their opening lines, DT 23–37 all begin in roughly the same fashion. For the initial hexametrical portion I use the reconstructed text of T. Drew-Bear, ‘Imprecations from Kourion’, *BASP* 9 (1972), pp. 85–107.

Here, as in the case of ‘Kronos the restrainer’, the situation of the invoked (here ghosts of the dead buried in the mass grave) provides the rationale for the invocation: they are asked to take away the *thumos* of Ariston, because at some point in time they had taken the *thumos* away from someone’s heart.<sup>21</sup>

There is a curious ambiguity about the identity of the heart in line 4 of the verse section of this curse. One might expect a reference to the situation of the ghosts themselves (i.e. ‘because you formerly took away anger from your own heart’), but since the tablets were found in a mass burial for crucified people it is unlikely that the ghosts of such people would be without anger – indeed the logic behind the placement of the curses suggests the opposite: that the ghosts of these ‘violently slain’ people (males and females, apparently) would be restless and angry and therefore useful to the sorcerer.<sup>22</sup> It is, in fact, far more likely that the metrical portion of the spell is older and originally focused on the archaic poetic meaning of *thumos* as a spirit or positive life-force, as we see in Circe’s advice to Odysseus and his crew (*Od.* 10.461): ‘But come eat food and drink wine, until you once again get *thumos*, “spirit”, in your breasts.’ The fourth verse of the Cyprian spell, then, would seem to describe the opposite action: θυμὸν ἀπὸ κραδίης πολυκηδέα πρόσθε λαβόντες ([you], who beforehand removed a much suffering spirit from your heart’). A unique reading in one of the parallel Cypriot texts suggests, moreover, that the version of the spell in the sorcerer’s exemplar may have given the participle λιπόντες as a variant reading for λαβόντες, a reading that is even more appropriate for the spirits of the dead: ‘you who left behind your long-suffering spirit’.<sup>23</sup> I suggest, then, that the original hexametrical spell referred generically to the unhappy death of a violently killed person, and that over time, thanks to the evolving meaning of the word *thumos*, it came to refer to ghosts especially adept at taking away victims’ anger, instead of their life.<sup>24</sup>

21 Here the subsequent mention of *orgê* makes it clear that the focus of these hybrid verse-and-prose spells is the anger of the victim, but the *thumos* that appears alone in the verse part could have easily referred to ‘power’, ‘will’ or even ‘sexual drive’; see Faraone, ‘*Thumos* as masculine ideal’, pp. 144–62.

22 For brief discussion and bibliography see Faraone, ‘The agonistic context’, p. 22 n. 6.

23 *DT* 32 adds λιπόντες after λαβόντες as if it is a textual variant. On the strength of this, R. Wünsch, *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae, Inscriptiones Graecae* 3.3 (Chicago: Ares, [1897] 1978), p. 70, somewhat adventurously restored the fourth hexameter of *DT* 25.1–7 as οἵτινες ἐνθάδε κείσθε βίον λιπόντες πολυκηδέα (‘having left behind your long suffering life’).

24 A. Dieterich, *Abraxas* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1891), pp. 88–90, and *DTA* 69–71.

Table 20.1 Comparison of three anger-restraining spells

|               | Agent           | Description                                                 | Command                                                |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Ostrakon      | Kronos          | who restrains the <i>thumos</i> of all men                  | restrain the <i>thumos</i> of X (a living human being) |
| Orphic Hymn   | Titans          | ancestors (πρόγονοι πατέρων) subterranean (γαίης ὑπένεσθεν) | send away the <i>mēnis</i> of X (a ghost)              |
| Cyprian curse | <i>daimones</i> | ancestors (πατέρες πατέρων) subterranean (οἱ κατὰ γῆν)      | remove the <i>thumos</i> from X (a living human being) |

These Cypriot *defixiones* do not, of course, mention the Titans, but they are none the less important *comparanda* for the ostrakon and the Orphic Hymn (see Table 20.1).

In the Cypriot curses the dead are described as ‘fathers of fathers’ (πατέρες πατέρων), a phrase which we can compare to ‘ancestors of our fathers’ (ἡμετέρων πρόγονοι πατέρων) in the Orphic text. And like the Titans, these δαίμονες are located beneath the earth and are asked as a collective to take away the anger (*thumos*) of a living man, just as the Titans are asked to send away the rage (*mēnis*) of a dead one. Since these lead tablets aim to silence the speech and control the behaviour of others towards the author, they also seem to work, like the ostrakon, in a protective manner, although they are not carried about on one’s person. In sum: all three of these texts invoke an Underworld power to protect them from anger, although Kronos’ subterranean position is not spelled out exactly, as it is in the other two texts. There is also the important distinction between human *thumos* and supernatural *mēnis*.

Are there, then, any hints in earlier narratives about Kronos and the Titans that in the Roman period they would end up being experts in anger management or protective magic? According to Bremmer’s recent and thorough study of the Titans there is no hint or connection to anger, except possibly at Hesiod’s *Theogony* 719, where they are described as ‘hyperthumic’ (ὑπέρθυμοι), an adjective that has a variety of meanings that range from ‘high-spirited’ (its most common meaning in archaic hexameters) to ‘extremely angry’.<sup>25</sup> After they are defeated by Zeus, the Titans are sent under the earth (717–18), where they are bound (718) hidden away by fog (729–30), in a place of no exit, around which Poseidon builds brazen walls and gates (732–3). According to Hesiod, then, the Titans are to this very day still bound in the Underworld, a situation that is apparently not imagined in the Orphic Hymn, where they do indeed dwell in Tartarus under the earth,

25 Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture*, pp. 73–99.

but apparently have freedom of movement to keep angry ghosts away from human households, perhaps by preventing them from leaving the Underworld. Given this theogonic tradition, we might imagine that they, like the ghosts of the violently slain, were angry about being locked up in Tartarus, but I am aware of no precise evidence for this.

There is, however, early evidence that the Titans could be invoked in curses to give help from the Underworld. Two archaic texts depict the goddess Hera swearing oaths or praying to the Titans as Underworld beings who have the power to punish. She mentions both Kronos and the Titans in book 14 of the *Iliad*, where, in her attempt to bribe the god Sleep to anaesthetize Zeus, she is forced to swear an especially awesome oath. Sleep demands that Hera take hold of the earth and sea ‘in order that all the gods, who are below with Kronos, may be witnesses for the two of us’ (273–4: ἵνα νῶϊν / μάρτυροι ὧς οἱ ἐνερθε θεοὶ Κρόνον ἀμφὶς ἑόντες). She agrees and swears to ‘all of the gods down in Tartarus, who are called Titans’ (278–9: θεοὺς . . . ἅπαντας τοὺς ὑποταρταρίους οἱ Τιτῆνες καλέονται). In this passage we see that in the Homeric tradition, at least, the Titans are gods who live in Tartarus under the rule of Kronos, and they enforce the truthfulness of oaths, presumably by punishing those who break their oaths.

We find a similar scene in the Delphic section of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, where this time the goddess Hera asks for their help in creating the monster Typhon as a possible rival to Zeus’s power (*Hymn to Apollo* 331–42):

After speaking in this way she went far off from the gods,  
angered in her heart.

Then straightaway cow-eyed mistress Hera made a curse-prayer  
and with her extended palm she struck the earth and spoke her  
*muthos*:

‘Listen now to me Earth and Heaven wide above,  
And you Titan gods, who dwell beneath the earth  
around great Tartarus, and from whom men and gods (descend)!  
You yourselves now listen to me, all of you, and grant (me) a child  
apart from Zeus, who is in no way weaker than him (Zeus) in  
violence!

But let him be as much superior in power, as wide-seeing Zeus  
was over Kronos!’

Then after she spoke in this way, she pounded the ground with  
her massive hand.

And then the life-giving earth moved, and when she (Hera) saw it  
she rejoiced throughout her heart, for she knew her request  
would be fulfilled.

This is, I think, an extraordinary passage. As in the Orphic Hymn and the Cypriot curse, Hera's prayer emphasizes the fact that the Titans dwell under the earth in Tartarus and she identifies them as the ancestors of divine and human life. Hera also alludes openly to their theogonic past, when she addresses them (as she does in the *Iliad* passage) as 'gods' in line 35 and frames her request as an opportunity for the Titans to redress Kronos' defeat at the hands of Zeus.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, the poet presents Hera as a somewhat helpless person, almost as if she were a human petitioner, rather than a goddess, praying to her dead ancestors – her uncles and aunts, the Titans. (The Titans are not dead, of course, but like Persephone in the first two thirds of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, they are removed from any intercourse with the gods and therefore are as good as dead.) Indeed, before and after the prayer itself, Hera pounds the earth with her palm, just as Meleager's mother does in Phoenix' cautionary tale, presumably to get the attention of those who dwell beneath the earth (*Il.* 9. 567–73):

She then made a curse-prayer to the gods, because she was greatly vexed over the killing of her brothers. And very many times she beats the plentiful earth with her hands, calling on Hades and dread Persephone to give death to her son, setting herself face down (i.e. upon the earth). The folds of her robe were drenched with tears. And from Erebus, the mist-wandering Erinys, who has an implacable heart, heard her.

The scene here is also quite dramatic: Meleager's mother lies face down on the ground and, like Hera, pounds it with her hands, while she invokes the king and queen of the Underworld and asks them to kill her own son. Here, as in Hera's curse, the pounding of the earth seems designed to get the attention of those dwelling below.<sup>27</sup>

This passage clearly describes an early oral form of cursing ritual, one that is probably similar to that of the earliest binding spells. Line 570, for example, sounds much like a hexameter at the start of a second-century BC *defixio* from Tanagra:<sup>28</sup>

26 The phrase Τιτῆνές τε θεοὶ (335) is odd and one is tempted to understand τιτῆνες as an adjective. Hesychius s.v. glosses τιτῆνες as 'avengers' (τιμωροί); cf. for this etymology Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture*, p. 86.

27 Touching one's hands to the earth also seems to have been a part of some especially dire oaths; see, for example, Bacchylides 5.42 and 8.19–20. When she makes her oath to the god Sleep in *Iliad* 14 (discussed earlier), Hera takes both earth and sea into her hands.

28 *DTA*, no. 81. Wünsch, *Defixionum Tabellae*, p. 25, was the first to note the hexameter, which on the lead tablet is split up between lines 1 and 3 with the words

Ἐ[ρμῆ]ν [κι]κλήσκω χθόνιον καὶ Περσεφόνηνα  
 δῆσαι Διονυσίας γλῶσσαν.

I call on Hermes the Chthonian and Persephone  
 to bind the tongue of Dionysias.

These curses, then, of Hera and Meleager's mother reflect some early and vigorous oral tradition of Greek cursing (perhaps a specifically female one), with one important difference: it makes perfect sense for Meleager's mortal mother to pound the earth and invoke Hades and Persephone to kill a mortal enemy, but Hera's invocation of Heaven, Earth and the Titans – with its pointed reference to the theogonic succession – does not make sense, unless we imagine some kind of historical development in the role of the Titans, who do, in fact, get most of Hera's attention: they are the last to be mentioned by Hera and, unlike Earth and Sky, they are described in two full verses. The reiterated imperative 'listen to me' at line 337, moreover, suggests that Hera aims her request primarily at them. She invokes them, moreover, in a manner quite similar to that in the Orphic Hymn: she mentions that they live under the earth near Tartarus and she stresses their genealogical importance. Hera, then, seems depicted as an angry human invoking the ghost of an ancestor to send up an avenger from the Underworld. If, then, the poet of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* has borrowed this invocation from a type-scene of sorts usually performed by a human petitioner, we can, I think, claim two texts that seem to reflect the same tradition of prayers addressed to the Titans and the Underworld: Hera's prayer in the Homeric hymn, which is usually dated to the sixth century BC, and the Orphic *Hymn to the Titans*, which dates at least as early as the third century AD, but perhaps much earlier.

At this point we might say that the role of Kronos and the Titans in later Greek magic fits into one of two cases described at the start of this study: (1) we could say this is a case of the 'demonization' of a classical god, because Kronos and the Titans were formerly gods of the upper realms, whom the sorcerers treat like ghosts or demons; or (2) one could argue that this is a case of 'continuity', since Hera in a fairly early text invokes the Titans in a curse that stresses their Underworld

(footnote 28 *continued*)

καταδίδημι Δ[ι]ονυσίαν intervening in line 2. He compares the similar hexametrical verse in Lucian's mock-epic description of the nocturnal necromantic rites of the Persian Magos Mithrobarzanes, who, after slaughtering sheep into a ditch like Odysseus, holds up a burning torch and sings a dactylic hexameter: καὶ νυχίαν Ἐκάτην καὶ ἐπαινὴν Περσεφόνειαν (Luc. *Men.* 9).



position. The Titans do, in fact, appear once on a Greek curse-tablet from Sicily aimed at an opponent in an upcoming lawsuit.<sup>29</sup>

καταδέω Ζωπυρίωνα τᾶς Μυμβυρ παρὰ Φερσε-  
φόναι καὶ παρὰ Τιτάνεσσι καταχθονίοις καὶ παρὰ  
π[ρ]ιχομένοισι νεκίοις.

I bind Zopyrion, son of Mumbur, by the side of Persephone and by the side of the Underworld Titans and by the side of the goose-fleshed (= π<εφ>[ρ]ιχομένοισι?) dead.

Despite some difficulties with the text, we can make out the Titans as one of several groups living in the Underworld with Persephone. In the mind of one third-century BC Greek author, then, the Titans apparently live in the subterranean kingdom of Persephone, rather than in bronze-walled prison described by Hesiod, and can be invoked along with human ghosts in binding spells. This is, of course, only a single example in a growing corpus of more than two thousand lead curse-tablets, but if we place it beside Hera's curse in the sixth-century BC *Hymn to Apollo*, we must, I think, leave open the possibility that, like Hermes and Persephone, the Titans were invoked continuously throughout Greek history as powerful Underworld gods and agents of curses and other magical operations.

Finally, what about Kronos, the leader of the Titans? There is, in fact, only one other later magical spell in which Kronos plays a major role:<sup>30</sup> the recipe for a 'Kronian Oracle' (Μαντρία Κρονική) found in the Paris magical handbook (*PGM* IV 3086–95), which begins as follows:<sup>31</sup>

Take two measures of salt and grind with a hand-mill, while saying the formula many times until the god appears to you. Do it at night in a place where grass grows. If while you are speaking you hear the heavy step of [someone] and a clatter of iron, the god is coming bound in chains, holding a sickle.

29 *IG* XIV no. 1442. For recent discussion, see D. R. Jordan, 'Two curse tablets from Lilybaeum', *GRBS* 38 (1997), pp. 387–96 at 391–6, and J. B. Curbera, 'Chthonians in Sicily', *GRBS* 38 (1997), pp. 397–408 at 404–5.

30 There is one other example that I know, but Kronos does not play a big role. The Cypriot *defixiones* discussed above (see n. 20) adjure the dead (e.g. *DT* 22.50) 'by the gods who were set out from Kronos (τοὺς ἀπὸ Κρόνου ἐκτεθέντας θεούς)'. The verb ἐκτίθημι usually refers to exposing children, but here I wonder if it refers to the child gods that were vomited forth by Kronos, i.e. Zeus and his siblings.

31 For this translation see H.-D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), *ad loc.*

Eitrem provides a good discussion of Kronos' agrarian connections in this spell; for example, his sickle and the fact that the ritual must be performed in a place where hay or grass (χόρτος) is growing.<sup>32</sup> I am, however, more interested in the theogonic elements, which seem to predominate. According to this recipe, by chanting an incantation and grinding salt in a hand-mill at the same time, we can force Kronos to appear and answer oracular questions. The descriptions of the god, moreover, connect him repeatedly with the Underworld and evoke some of the features of his early theogonic career (when he castrated his father with the sickle) and his present life chained up in Tartarus.<sup>33</sup>

Most informative, however, is the invocation that we are to intone while grinding the salt (*PGM* IV 3097–109):<sup>34</sup>

I summon you, the great, holy, the one who created the inhabited world, against whom the transgression was committed by your own son, you whom Helios bound with adamantine fetters lest the universe be mixed together, you hermaphrodite, father of the thunderbolt, you who have mastery even over those under the earth (MAGICAL NAMES), come master, god and tell me by necessity concerning the so-and-so matter, for I am the one who revolted against you, (MAGICAL NAMES).

Kronos is invoked here, perhaps erroneously, as a creator god, who still has 'mastery over those under the earth', despite the fact that he was mistreated by his son and then bound in fetters. There is, however, some confusion about this mistreatment. The invocation at the very start refers to a 'transgression committed by your own son', which is rather vague and could easily refer to Zeus' overthrow of his father, as in the standard Hesiodic account. But in the recipe for the phylactery in lines 3115–16 and following, we are told to engrave a pig's rib with an image of Zeus holding a sickle. This suggests an alternate theogonic tradition – or perhaps simply a mistaken one – in which Zeus castrates his father Kronos. And unlike the ostrakon spell, this one refers openly to Kronos' present home in the Underworld. We are to

32 S. Eitrem, 'Kronos in der Magie', in *Mélanges J. Bidez = Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales* 2, 2 vols (1934), I, pp. 351–60.

33 The Greeks, in the rare instances when they offered cult to Kronos, sometimes bound the feet of his statues with fetters. See R. Kotansky, 'Kronos and a new magical inscription on a gem in the J. P. Getty Museum', *Ancient World* 3 (1980), pp. 29–32, and H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 97–8.

34 Betz, *Translation, ad loc.* (with one small change).

invoke him, for example, as ‘you who restrain even those under the earth’ (ὁς καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ γῆν κατέχεις), a title which uses the same verb, κατέχειν, as we saw in his invocation on the ostrakon: ‘O Kronos, who restrains the *thumos* of all human beings’ (ὁ κατέχων τὸν θυμὸν ὅλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων). At the end of the spell, Kronos is told to ‘go back to your own places’ and we should, I think, imagine that he returns to the Underworld.<sup>35</sup>

Many of the details of this spell, therefore, refer to Kronos’ theogonic persona (for example, as the wielder of the sickle) and to his present subterranean position in Tartarus, but it is quite difficult to understand why he is here connected with divination. As far as I know there are no other oracles of Kronos. In fact, as in the case of Hera’s invocation of the Titans, I suspect that, because Kronos ends up in Tartarus in the standard theogonic narrative, he gradually becomes the object of various mortal prayers that are traditionally addressed to the human dead. In the ‘Oracle of Kronos’ the magician certainly seems to use Kronos as if he were a human ghost who is forced up out of Hades. Indeed, the recipe displays many of the features of necromantic ritual: the fear of the ghost and the need for a phylactery; the impersonation of a more powerful god to compel the ghost (here we are to imitate Zeus); the questioning of Kronos; and even the timing of the encounter at night. There is, moreover, an expectation that upon his arrival Kronos will be angry: after the first invocation, the sorcerer adds an additional ‘compulsive formula’ (ὁ ἐπ’ ἀνάγκης λόγος) that will force him to speak (3110–15): ‘Say these things whenever he comes close threatening you (ὅταν ἀπειλῶν εἰσέρχηται), in order that he be soothed (ἵνα πρᾶνθῇ) and speak about the things you enquire.’ Here, then, Kronos is assumed to be angry at his own imprisonment in Tartarus. Thus, unlike the oracular spells addressed to Apollo (mentioned at the start of this chapter), where the worship of an oracular god is miniaturized and reused privately, Kronos, a god previously unacquainted with prophecy, becomes oracular by analogy, because he dwells under the ground just like the oracular dead.

Let me sum up, then, the use of Kronos and the Titans in later magical rituals. They appear in three different roles, all of which have

35 Richard Janko pointed out to me in conversation at the conference that the reversal of the poles of the rite (from bringing the god to sending him away) is also suggested by the reversal (with some errors) of the order of the names in the magical *logos* used to call him up at 3105 (‘AIE OI PAIDALIS PHRENOTEI CHEIDÓ STYGARDÊS SANKLOEN GENECHRONA KOIRAPSAI KÊRIDEU THALAMNIA OCHOTA ANEDEI, come master’) and that used to send him away at 3120 (‘ANAEA OCHETA THALAMNIA KÊRIDEU KOIRAPSIA GENECHRONA SANÊLON STYGARDÊS CHLEIDÓ PHRAINOLE PAIDALIS IAEI, go away, master of the world’).

pronounced chthonic features. The ostrakon invokes Kronos as a specialist in controlling the *thumos* of living mortals, a role that is elsewhere given to the dead or to other chthonic beings, like the *daimones* on the Cyprian curse-tablets. In *Orphic Hymn* 37, on the other hand, the Titans are asked to ‘ward off’ the anger of a ghost, a plea that uses a verb (ἀποτρέπειν) that commonly appears on amulets. And they, too, are identified as inhabitants of the Underworld. They are not ‘chthonic’, of course, in the sense that Hades and Persephone are, because they are king and queen of the dead, but rather because they are an older generation of gods who end up in an Underworld prison. The theogonic traditions underscore the fact that the Titans are locked up for good, not that they are intrinsically chthonic. Indeed, there is an alternative tradition in which Kronos and the Titans reside unmolested at the edges of the earth, not imprisoned beneath it,<sup>36</sup> but this tradition is not alluded to in our extant magical texts.

The prayer-curse of Hera in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* highlights the awkwardness of their transformation: although she is pounding on the earth and performing a chthonic curse like Meleager’s mother, she none the less invokes Heaven and Earth (the parents of the Titans) as if they too were down under her feet. Thus, here, at a relatively early stage, we can see how the permanent position of the Titans in the Underworld has already begun to outweigh their historical status as the earlier race of gods, who are aunts and uncles to Zeus and Hera. And we have seen, finally, how in the recipe for the ‘Kronian Oracle’, Kronos is himself summoned – chains and all – like a ghost to a necromantic ritual. I would not, therefore, characterize these developments simply as cases of continuity, whereby traditionally chthonic gods (like Hades and Hermes) persist in their traditional roles and rituals straight through the Roman period. I would propose, instead, that Kronos and Titans, because of the fame of the theogonic stories in which they appear, are somehow rediscovered or re-imagined as powerful Underworld gods because in most versions of the story their final abode is in Tartarus, and Tartarus is imagined as a place below the surface of the earth. In the *Theogony* Hesiod, of course, makes no mention of any continued Titanic role in the world of humans, but in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, composed perhaps a half-century later, we see clear signs of this transition in Hera’s prayer for revenge.

Finally: why are Kronos and the Titans connected with anger? I have argued elsewhere (see n. 14) that anger-binding spells evolved out of the Greek tradition of binding spells because of the initial range of associations of *thumos* and *orgê*, words which in earlier spells refer to

36 Versnel, *Inconsistencies*, pp. 95–7.

male strength and forcefulness, and only later to 'anger'. The theme of anger does, however, play an important role in these literary invocations of Kronos and the Titans. Hera, in the only account where we have a narrative frame, is angry (*Hymn to Apollo* 331: *χωομένη*) when she makes her curse, and there is reason to think that Kronos and the Titans (on the analogy of human *βαιοθάνατοι*, 'ghosts of the violent slain') remain angry in the Underworld at the way Zeus mistreated them. In her plea to make her monstrous son stronger than Zeus by as much as Zeus was stronger than Kronos, Hera certainly aims to provoke such emotions in the Titans. In the later magical spells themselves, however, this idea is only made explicit in the 'Oracle of Kronos', where the sorcerer has a special charm to soothe him when he appears threateningly.

## *HOMO FICTOR DEORUM EST:* ENVISIONING THE DIVINE IN LATE ANTIQUE DIVINATORY SPELLS

*Sarah Iles Johnston*

At *Odyssey* 16.161, the poet tells us ‘the gods do not show themselves clearly to everyone’, and there is no reason to doubt him. In this passage it is only Odysseus – and, interestingly, a group of dogs – who realize that Athena is among them. Telemachos, although standing nearby, is unaware of her presence. In other cases, no one at all recognizes a god in their midst: the royal family of Eleusis lives for weeks without knowing that they have Demeter as their nursemaid.<sup>1</sup> Later Greek narratives, too, indicate that the gods were hard to recognize. Semele is so uncertain about whom she has been sleeping with – Zeus or a mortal man pretending to be Zeus – that she risks her life to find out, and loses the bet – or wins it, depending on how you look at things. After all, it turns out that Semele was right and her so-called maidservant, Beroë, was wrong. If only Semele had stopped worrying about who her paramour was and started worrying instead about who *Beroë* really was – namely, Hera in disguise – she would have been better off.<sup>2</sup>

Outside of narrative, certainty that one was interacting with the gods was hindered not so much by divine disguises as by what we have to call simple paucity of proof: one presumed that a god was

I am grateful to Jan Bremmer for inviting me to contribute this chapter, which prompted me to think in a different way about materials on which I have been working for many years; and to members of the original audience for their insightful comments. Among the latter, I particularly thank Richard Buxton. I also thank my doctoral students Bridget Buchholz and Adria Haluszka, whose questions about the ways in which divinity can be imagined have given me much food for thought in the past year.

1 *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 184–274.

2 *Ov. Met.* 3.256–315, *Hyg. Fab.* 167, 179; *Apollod. Bibl.* 3.4.3; cf. *Diod. Sic.* 3.64.3–4. The story is perhaps already in Aeschylus: fr. 168 Radt; schol. ad *Ar. Ran.* 1344. Discussion at T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 472–6.

present during cult worship because one had performed a hymn invoking him, provided meat on his altar and done other things to make the situation inviting, but we rarely hear of any tangible signs – visible, audible or otherwise – that confirm presence. Apparently, one simply proceeded on the assumption that the god was there and paying attention.

A special exception is divination, which I define for the purposes of this chapter as any of a variety of ways of obtaining information from beyond the mortal sphere that you would not otherwise have. Typically, such information answers specific questions of immediate relevance: should we start the battle now, should we establish a colony, what do we need to do to stop the plague that besets our city, or how can I conceive a child? One might *pray* for divine help in *accomplishing* any of these things as part of cultic worship, but not expect an immediate answer – one might start the colony and then have it fail two months into its establishment, or one might embark on a pregnancy that miscarries after a few months. Prayer is a request that may or may not bring results. In a *divinatory* setting, in contrast, answers were usually given right away. It might take a long time to *interpret* those answers – here I think of Robert Parker's 1985 essay that demonstrated the complexity of interpreting Delphic responses within a civic setting, as well as of such things as private consultation of *manteis* or other practitioners who claimed expertise in interpreting divinatory signs.<sup>3</sup> One might find out, moreover, that one's interpretations had been faulty years later – when the mule that Apollo mentioned turned out to be Cyrus, for example.<sup>4</sup> None the less, in most divinatory situations, an answer itself came fast, a sure indication that the divinity involved had at least been attentive.

This didn't necessarily imply that the god was actually present. Certainly, presence was assumed for Apollo at Delphi or Klaros and the prophet's speech was understood to confirm it – Apollo usually spoke in the first person through his prophets' mouths – but the situation was cloudier when other methods were employed, such as reading entrails or observing the movements of birds and other animals. The ongoing discussions of the Stoics and others make it clear that the matter of how directly the gods involved themselves in

3 R. Parker, 'Greek states and Greek oracles', in P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (eds), *Crux: Essays Presented to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix on his 75th Birthday*, History of Political Thought VI 1/2 (Sidmouth: Duckworth, 1985), pp. 298–326, repr. in R. Buxton (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 76–108).

4 Hdt. 1.55.2 and 1.91.5.

these procedures was far from settled.<sup>5</sup> And even when presence was assumed, there was seldom any direct manifestation of the divine that was available to the human senses: with a few exceptions that I will discuss at the end of this chapter, the closest one came was hearing an enthused prophet speak, or seeing Asklepios or a similar god in an incubated dream.

We should remember one more point as well: when the gods *did* manifest themselves – whether it be in narrative sources such as the Homeric poems or in real-life divinatory situations such as those at Epidauros and Delphi – it was they who were calling the shots. They chose whether to give a sign of their presence, and they chose the form that sign would take. One assumes that, had the kidnapped Cretan sailors of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* been surveyed as to how they might expect the god to manifest himself upon their ship, few of them would have come up with the idea of a dolphin. That was surely meant to be surprising – a matter of what Richard Buxton calls *thambos* in Chapter 4 of this volume – even within the miraculously imaginative world of the poem.<sup>6</sup> A patient at Epidauros perhaps felt more certain that he or she would see one of a relatively limited number of possible things in his or her dream: if not Asklepios, then one of his children or his dog or his snake – the range of possibilities was more limited than in narrative settings because countless stories of what had happened to others who slept at Epidauros predisposed the dreamer to dream in a standardized way. But as a general rule, to paraphrase Homer, even in divinatory settings, the gods were, if not always hard to *perceive*, then at least hard to *predict*.

Against this backdrop of uncertainty and unpredictability, I want to examine the ways that gods manifested themselves in divinatory procedures described in two kinds of sources from the first few centuries AD. The first is what we call, collectively, the magical papyri – that is, the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* and the *Papyri Demoticae Magicae*. The second is what I will call, collectively, theurgic sources. These include, most prominently, the *Chaldean Oracles* and the treatise by Iamblichus that came to be known as *On the Mysteries of Egypt*. I will not discuss here the fraught question of how we should distinguish

5 For discussion of Stoic attitudes towards divination, see A. S. Pease, *M. Tulli Ciceronis De Divinatione*, 2 vols (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1920/3; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), pp. 60–2; P. T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 162–253; D. Wardle, tr. and comm., *Cicero on Divination Book 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 28–36, 108–14; S. I. Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 5, 12–15.

6 *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 399–413. In fact, at line 415, the poet refers to the dolphin as a *mega thauma* – a great marvel.



magic from theurgy, any more than I will discuss the question of how we should distinguish magic from religion. It is impossible to address either of these issues in any way that would be useful to the present discussion, and probably impossible to answer them in any other useful way, either. Distinctions were made by some of the practitioners themselves, but these usually concerned the ideologies that underlay what were pragmatically similar ritual techniques and concerns.

I will focus on demonstrating two things about theurgic and magical divinatory procedures. First, that the gods and other divine entities who made them work – angels, *daemones* and the like – manifested themselves in ways that the practitioner felt confident of being able to predict, and sometimes even to systematize and analyse. In contrast to the unexpected dolphin hijacking a Cretan ship, the divine visitors found in my materials are often described *before* they arrive. Second, the practitioner not only expected to *know* in advance what he would see or hear, but sometimes also expected to be able to *control* it. He could ask the visitor to take on a specific form, anthropomorphic or otherwise, and expected his request to be accommodated.

I will limit my examples in this chapter for the sake of space, but I will adduce some from each of four of the most important categories: (1) direct encounters – under this rubric I include what the practitioners called both *systasis* and *autopsia*; (2) *phôtagôgia*, or the ‘leading in of light’; (3) dream divination; and (4) *hê technê telestikê*, or statue animation. These divisions are somewhat artificial, given that magical and theurgic rituals often combined parts of different procedures or declared themselves to be more than one of these, but they are heuristically useful, none the less, for highlighting central features.<sup>7</sup>

*Direct encounters:* In the magical papyri, the words *systasis* and *autopsia* are most often applied to phenomena that we ourselves probably would not consider to be direct because they do not involve the divine visitor standing right in front of the magician. For example, the appearance of a god in either a dream or in a lynchnomantic or lecanomantic procedure, all of which I will discuss below, could be labelled a ‘direct encounter’. This fluidity of the term’s application underscores the high value that magicians placed on the directness

<sup>7</sup> I discuss many aspects of these procedures in greater detail in ‘*Fiat lux, fiat ritus*: divine light and the late antique defense of ritual’, in M. Kapstein (ed.), *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Transformative Vision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 5–24; ‘Charming children: the use of the child in ancient divination’, *Arethusa* 34 (2001), pp. 97–118; ‘animating statues: a case study in ritual’, *Arethusa* 41 (2008), pp. 445–78; and ‘Sending dreams, restraining dreams: *oneiropompeia* in theory and in practice’, in C. Walde and E. Scioli (eds), *Sub Imagine Somni* (Pisa: ETS, forthcoming).

of encounters; they were willing to seek them through a variety of methods, and willing to understand as direct any encounter in which the god was interacting with them personally. I will return to this point.

There are some cases, however, where the god and magician really do meet face to face in the sense that we would use that phrase. Very often in these instances, the spell describes exactly what the god will look like, leaving no room for doubt: in one spell, the magician is promised that he will see Apollo carrying a cup in which to receive a drink offering, and in another that he will see a god seated on a lotus decorated with rays of light. In a third, rather frightening, spell, he is told that he will both see and hear Kronos approaching him, rattling the chains with which Zeus once bound him and carrying the sickle that he used to castrate his father.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the rituals of the magical papyri, in theurgy face-to-face encounters were *de rigueur*. Not only were you unlikely to get really reliable divinatory information in any other way, but you couldn't progress along the theurgic path itself without encountering the gods directly, because it was their goodness, which was bestowed upon you during such an encounter, that enhanced the purity of your soul and thereby made other things possible.<sup>9</sup> Theurgists completely rejected most popular methods of divination, because they were understood not only to be indirect, but also to be potentially deceptive – demons and ghosts, not gods and angels, might manifest themselves this way, pass on false information and also corrupt the soul's purity.<sup>10</sup>

Because direct encounters were highly charged with both potential and danger, then, the theurgists put a lot of effort into learning how to discern exactly who or what they were meeting. This was not as simple as it may sound, because the gods, angels and other beneficent entities whom the theurgists expected to arrive were not always anthropo-

8 *PGM* IV.930–1114, VII.727–39, IV.3086–3124. See also e.g. *PGM* I.1–42, 42–195 (the god dines and talks with the magician; the magician kisses his hand); III.1–164 (the cat-faced god is asked to appear in his own form); VI.1–47 (Apollo is called on to arrive in his traditional form, i.e. with golden hair); XIII.1–343 at 72–3, where the god is asked to appear in a 'good' form, and 266–8, where the god talks to the magician as if he were a fellow god; XIII.343–646 at 584–5, where the god is called on to appear in his own form; XII.152–60, where the 'serpent-faced god' appears and delivers a divine revelation. Gods also appear in their own forms or forms anticipated by the magician in non-divinatory spells, including some that are rather horrifying, e.g. a goddess who seems to be Hekate/Selene in *PGM* IV.2441–621.

9 E.g. *Iamb. Myst.* 3.31, 178.8–16.

10 *Chaldean Oracles* fr. 107. The dangers of using false techniques of divination is discussed throughout *Iamb. Myst.* books 2 and 3. Cf. also Eun. *VP* 473.

morphic or even theriomorphic. Rather, they often appeared as what they really were, according to theurgic ontology: pure light. The light might take on various abstract shapes – a perfect sphere, for example – or move in different patterns or at different speeds through the air, depending on the rank of the entity, but if one were properly trained, one could always determine with whom or what one was interacting. Such training could be obtained from book 2 of Iamblichus' treatise on the mysteries, for example, where he expounds at considerable length on the topic. Indeed, as Eunapius tells us, Iamblichus was somewhat of an expert in the field, having once unmasked the ghost of a dead gladiator pretending to be Apollo.<sup>11</sup>

The theurgic systemization of divine appearances is interesting not only because it in general underscores the importance of divine encounters in theurgy, but for two other reasons as well. First, it clearly serves to *prepare* the theurgist for exactly what he will see. Again, this is in contrast to any evidence we see in earlier periods, when waiting for a god to manifest himself physically at all was usually fruitless, much less waiting for one to manifest himself in a specific, predictable form (compare, once more, Buxton's discussion of *thambos* in divine manifestations). This preparedness helped to prevent ghostly deception, as I have already noted, but it also helped the theurgist ensure that he knew just how far he had managed to progress on the theurgic ladder, and what to do next. That is, each rank of entity had specific benefits to bestow: the gods gave an 'enormous gladness of mind', the angels gave 'a rational wisdom', and the *daemones* gave a generative power that would help the theurgist participate in the ongoing demiurgic re-creation of the cosmos, for example.<sup>12</sup>

The second reason this theurgic systemization is interesting is that the theurgists have in effect designed their own gods. Although they called their gods by traditional names – Hekate, Apollo, Eros, Zeus, etc. – and although they used other traditional terms such as '*daemones*' and 'heroes' for lesser ranks of entities, they did not necessarily expect them to appear in the forms they had in traditional myth and cult. This was due to the Platonic basis of theurgy: since the Transcendent Father – the highest god of their system – was understood to be made purely of fiery, formless light, then one would expect that the

11 In addition to Iamb. *Myst* book 2, see *Chaldean Oracles* frs. 142–8 with the context provided in R. Majercik's 1989 translation and commentary (Leiden: Brill), and S. I. Johnston, 'Riders in the sky: cavalier gods and theurgic salvation in the second century, A.D.', *CPh* 87 (1992), pp. 303–21. On Iamblichus' adventure: Eun. *VP* 473.

12 Issues such as these are discussed throughout Iamb. *Myst.* book 2; see, for example, 2.5–6, 78.1–83.7.

subordinate entities who were *hypostaseis* of that god would be made of formless (or at least relatively unformed) light, as well.<sup>13</sup> But what is really striking is that the theurgists did not hesitate to combine *both* the expectation that a god or an angel or a *daemon* would appear in a predictable form *and* the Platonic expectation that at least the higher levels of such entities would be nearly aniconic. Earlier philosophers had considered the idea that divinity was light – that was not so new – but it was the theurgists who took the further step of actually expecting divinity to appear to them in that mode.

A term that the theurgists sometimes used to describe the act of bringing on one of these light-filled encounters was *phôtagôgia* – the leading in of light.<sup>14</sup> This brings me to my second topic, of the same name. In the magical papyri, the word *phôtagôgia* and similar terms are used for a far wider range of phenomena than in theurgy, including lychnomancy – that is, divination by looking at the flame of a lamp – and lecanomancy – that is, divination by looking at shimmering liquid in a bowl. In the magical papyri, these two categories collapse to some degree, given that in lecanomancy, the magician shines lamplight into the bowl of liquid at which he or his assistant then gazes. In other words, in both techniques, lamplight is the vehicle or portal through which gods pass from their world into our own. And ‘pass into’ really is the appropriate description here: in contrast to otherwise similar methods of divining both in Greek and Roman antiquity and in other cultures, the lecanomantic and lychnomantic procedures of the magical papyri were thought to bring the gods *themselves* into the liquid or flame, rather than merely their images or (even more distantly) various shapes that had to be interpreted.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, the papyrus spells often use the terms *systasis* and *autopsia* for these procedures, as well as *phôtagôgia* – in addition to also sometimes labelling them *lekanomanteia* or *lychnomanteia*. It’s not uncommon to find two or even three of these terms used to describe the same spell (as well as, sometimes, references to dreams).<sup>16</sup>

13 As expressed e.g. at *Chaldean Oracles* frs. 34–9; further at Johnston, ‘*Fiat lux*’.

14 E.g. Iamb. *Myst.* 3.14, 132.9, 133.10–11 and 134.8, although here the matter is complicated by Iamblichus’ own theory of how the ‘imaginative’ eye sees the gods as mediated by the vehicle of the soul. Cf. Johnston, ‘*Fiat lux*’.

15 That the magician expects to see the deity directly, even if within a flame or bowl of liquid, is underscored by the fact that some of these spells also include directions for preparing special eye ointments that will facilitate the vision or protect the eyes from its extraordinary brightness. E.g. *PDM* xiv.295–308, 805–40, 856–75, 875–85 and 1110–29. Cf. *PGM* IV.774–9, V.54–69 and VII.335–47 in which eye ointments are prepared for what the spells describe as direct encounters (although, as we have seen, the line between the categories is not always firm).

16 E.g. *PGM* I.262–347, IV.154–285, IV.930–1114, V.54–69, VII.319–34, VIII.64–110 and further at Johnston, ‘Charming children’.

The gods can even interact with the magician from inside the bowl or flame: for example, the magician can ask Anubis to leave the bowl in order to fetch other gods back with him, and to bring back a table and food so that the gathered gods may have a feast. Subsequently, when dinner is over, the magician can ask which one of the gods is willing to answer his questions; the volunteer raises his or her hand and replies from inside the bowl.<sup>17</sup> Such spells constitute very direct encounters, and notably spell out in advance everything that the magician will see or experience.

As in the cases of direct encounter that I discussed above – the appearance of Apollo, the appearance of the god on a lotus and the appearance of Kronos – the gods in these spells are usually expected to manifest themselves in recognizable forms. In one, for instance, Aphrodite is asked to appear in a vessel of water, revealing her ‘lovely face’, and the spells like those I discussed in the preceding paragraph, where a whole group of gods are called into the bowl by Anubis, assume that each god is recognizable as well.<sup>18</sup> When exact identity markers are not specified, it is sometimes the case that the magician at least requests the god to appear in a form that is pleasant: thus, one charm that invokes a god through the flame of a lamp calls on him to appear in a form that is ‘happy, kind, gentle, glorious, not angry’.<sup>19</sup>

Some spells use the expectation that the gods will appear in specific forms as a failsafe measure: in one case, where the magician is using an assistant to gaze at the bowl rather than gazing himself, he is told that, when the assistant claims that he sees the servants of the god entering the bowl of liquid, carrying the throne on which the god will subsequently sit, he is to ask the assistant what kinds of crowns the servants are wearing, and what they carry in front of the throne. If the assistant says they are wearing olive crowns and carrying a censer, then everything is OK – that is, the vision is a true one and the god will speak accurately, rather than a false one in which a deceptive entity will appear and deceive the magician.<sup>20</sup> The magician, then, was just as leery of deception and possible malfunctions as was the theurgist, and he sought proofs that could be applied to spells while they were in progress, before things went too far.

Truth and falsity is a matter of concern in the third type of

17 *PDM* xiv.528–53 and cf. e.g. *PGM* IV.930–1114, VII.540–78 (the gods are said to be present, *paraginomenous*, at the divination) and *PDM* xiv.1–92. More on this at Johnston, ‘Charming children’.

18 *PGM* IV.3209–54.

19 *PGM* IV.930–1114. Notably, the spell also refers to itself as a ‘direct vision’ charm, *autopsia*, in the first line

20 *PGM* V.1–53.

procedure I will discuss, as well: divining by seeing the gods in dreams. Although, as I noted, the theurgists rejected dreams as a means of prophecy, in the papyri, dreams are presented as a readily available means of obtaining information directly from the divine realm and the magician is presented as an expert at manipulating them. We also find, in the papyri, spells that teach the magician how to send deceptive dreams into *another* person's sleep, which will put ideas into the sleepers' minds that they will accept as divinely prophetic.

I will start by describing those, to provide contrast for the dreams the magician brings upon himself. The essential idea that a specially designed dream could be dispatched to a sleeper was an old one: as early as the *Odyssey*, Athena sends a dream to Penelope that takes on the shape of her sister and comforts her (4.795–841). It is first in the magical papyri, however, that we find humans, rather than gods, performing such feats, and it is also in the papyri that we first encounter the technical term for such an art, '*oneiopompeia*'. Almost always, these oneiopompic spells relied on spirits of the dead or sometimes a god connected with the world of the dead, such as Anubis or Osiris, to do their work. Very frequently, moreover, oneiopompic spells indicate that the magician could command that ghost or god to assume whatever shape was necessary to fool the dreamer into believing the messages that they carried.<sup>21</sup> Scholars have often characterized dreams in the ancient world as comprising a particularly private means of communicating with the divine – and this is correct, when we are thinking of incubation rites, for example, in which a god healed a patient while he or she slept. But precisely *because* the dream world was normally understood to be private, the possibility that human magicians were able to send disguised ghosts into it would have been quite frightening. It was bad enough to have Zeus' dreams occasionally tricking people like Agamemnon;<sup>22</sup> once you added magicians to the mix, the prophetic value of the average person's dreams became very questionable.

It's not surprising, then, that if magicians used *oneiopompeia* to manipulate other people's dreams, they also developed skills to guarantee the integrity of their own – this brings me back to the spells intended to bring on dreams. In producing his own dreams, the magician takes trouble to ensure that it will always be a major god whom he sees, such as Apollo – not a ghost or a god of the dead – and often, as in other spells that we have already examined, he asks the god to

21 E.g. *PGM* I.42–195, IV.1716–870, IV.2441–621, XII. 14–95 and 107–21; *PDM* Suppl. 40–60, 101–16 and 117–30; cf. the *Alexander Romance* 1.4–12 Kroll.

22 *Iliad* 2.1–75.

appear in ‘one of his own forms’, as if to provide ready visual proof that the god is who he claims to be.<sup>23</sup> In a Demotic spell, the god is even asked, very precisely, to appear in the same form as he did when he appeared to Moses on the mountain (we cannot help but wonder whether this means the magician was hoping to see the god’s posterior, as in Exodus 33).<sup>24</sup> Alternatively, the magician might ask the visitor to appear in some other shape. In one case, for example, a god is asked to take on the form of a priest, and in another, a divinely sent angel is asked to take the form of one of the magician’s friends, but with a star on his forehead so as to make it clear that he is an angel. In another spell, the god is told to appear in the form of a priest if what the practitioner is inquiring about will turn out well and in the form of a soldier if it will not.<sup>25</sup>

In all three of the procedures I have discussed so far – direct visions, *phôtagôgia* and dreams – the practitioner ‘designs’ his own gods. That is, he confidently projects what they will look like and even, on occasion, chooses their appearances himself. This means that he has decided, consciously or unconsciously, what the essential characteristics and limits of divinity are. Our final topic, statue animation (*hê telestikê technê*), will provide the most concrete example yet of this behaviour. For reasons of space, I will not discuss the rituals that were used actually to call a god into a statue to prophesy,<sup>26</sup> but will focus instead on how the divinatory statue was created, for it was through the physical statue that the appearance of the god was articulated.

Although there are traces of statue animation in a few rituals of the magical papyri, the technique was most used and most discussed by the theurgists. Proclus, for instance, says: ‘the telestic art, by means of *symbola* and ineffable *synthêmata*, represents and makes statues suitable to becoming receptacles (*hypodochai*) for the illuminations of the gods’.<sup>27</sup> Proclus is here referring to the fact that theurgic statues were composed of various substances – plant, animal and mineral – that were understood to have cosmogonic links to the god in question and thereby be able to attract and serve as appropriate dwelling places for that particular god. The gods themselves taught the theurgists what these substances were. In one of the *Chaldean Oracles*, for example,

23 E.g. *PGM* V.370–446, esp. 415–19, VII.664–85, XII.144–52. Cf. also VIII.64–110, where Bes is asked to appear to the magician in a rather frightening mode – headless and ‘having his face beside his feet, with his mouth full of fire’. But the point is that this is how Bes usually appears – it guarantees authenticity.

24 Moses: *PDM* xiv.117–49 at 130.

25 *PGM* VII.795–845; *PDM* xiv.93–114 and 232–8.

26 On this, see Johnston, ‘Animating statues’.

27 *Commentary on Plato’s Cratylus*, 19.12.

Hekate tells the theurgist that he should make her statue out of a mixture of wild rue, resin, myrrh, frankincense and a type of small lizard that dwells near the house.<sup>28</sup>

One might assume that if the power to attract the god lay in these substances, then the shape of the receptacle into which the god was to enter – the receptacle created from these substances – would not matter much. If the combination was right, even a raw lump of the mixture should serve perfectly well. But according to Porphyry, the gods had also taught the theurgists ‘what sort of shape should be given to their statues, and in what forms they show themselves, and in what sorts of places they dwell . . . they themselves indicated how they appear as far as their forms are concerned, and based on this, their images were set up as they are’.<sup>29</sup>

The gods were understood to be acting in the interest of humans when they taught all of this. Several theurgic passages explain that statues provided an appropriate physical avenue through which humans, who were trapped in the material world, could worship entities who were themselves immaterial – being made from substances that are cosmologically related to the god, the statues are an acceptable link between otherwise unconnectable realms. Another purpose is explained by Porphyry, when he continues the passage I quoted a moment ago:

men have revealed to the senses, through cognate images (*eikonôn symphylôn*), god and god’s powers, and thus have represented invisible things by manifest images, [as] I will show to those who have learned to read from the statues as from books the things there written concerning the gods.<sup>30</sup>

Statues could be educational, in other words; by studying the forms the gods had chosen to represent themselves, the theurgist could learn more about their nature.

Properly constructed statues, then, joined the world of the gods to that of humans in at least two ways: gods would enter into the statues and give oracles, but even when empty, the statues served to inform mortals about what the gods were really like. The construction was, appropriately for something that bound the two worlds together, a cooperative effort: mortals gathered the materials from which the statues were made and shaped their outer appearances, but they did

28 *Chaldean Oracles* fr. 224.

29 Porph. *Concerning Statues* fr. 316 Smith.

30 Porph. *Concerning Statues* fr. 351 Smith.



so under the direction of the gods. The telestic art therefore offers an intriguingly self-conscious variation on the other procedures I have discussed so far. As a craftsman of telestic statues, it would have been hard for the theurgist to contradict Hermes Trismegistus' claim that *homo fictor deorum est*,<sup>31</sup> but he validated his creative rights by ascribing his talents to the gods themselves: *verus fictor deorum deus est*.<sup>32</sup>

Having finished this survey of the ways in which gods manifested themselves in magical and theurgic divinatory procedures, we might now consider what the picture suggests. One thing is already evident: the turn in late antique magic and theurgy towards expecting the gods to manifest themselves in clear and predictable forms was motivated in large part by a desire to avoid being deceived. This is an interesting point that stands in contrast to what we see in earlier periods. When there was concern about divinatory deception in earlier times, it tended to focus on the human conveyers of divination: had the Pythia been bribed?<sup>33</sup> Was the *mantis* playing straight with you?<sup>34</sup> Before later antiquity, we hear about *divine* deception only in so far as a god himself might decide to send a misleading dream, as Zeus does to Agamemnon, or might decide to couch his answer in riddling terms, as Apollo famously did with Croesus and Aegeus, for example.<sup>35</sup> As far as I have been able to discover, there was never any expectation during earlier periods that some other creature, pretending to be Zeus or Apollo, might completely arrogate the god's role, as the magicians and theurgists thought a ghost or demon might. Why did this concern arise?

We might point to the fact that later antiquity saw increased curiosity and apparent uncertainty about what god(s) were like, or who they were, or why they would visit people – in fact, some of the great oracles were asked to weigh in on these issues. Didyma was asked whether Christ was a god or a man. Klaros, when asked a similar question, famously held forth that Hades, Dionysos, Zeus and Helios were all one and the same – a response with which we might sympathize,

31 Aug. *CD* 8.23, quoting the Hermetic *Asclepius* 23. The specific topic of the conversation between Trismegistus and Asclepius at this point is, in fact, the creation of statues.

32 This idea is not absent from the magical papyri – we occasionally encounter spells that the magician claims he has learned from the gods themselves – but more commonly, a magician validates his material by ascribing it to earlier, and greater, magicians.

33 Hdt. 5.63, 90–1 and 6.66, 75 and 122; cf. Ephorus *FGH* 70 F 119 = Strabo 9.2.4, which tells about a Dodonian prophetess who was accused of altering a response.

34 See, for example, Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.29.

35 Hdt. 1.55.2 and 1.91.5; Eur. *Med.* 665–81.

given that the Oracle was attempting to continue operations within a world populated by a dazzlingly large array of deities: Egyptian, Jewish and others in addition to the more familiar Greek and Roman. In the second century, a priestess of Demeter named Alexandra asked Didyma why the gods were appearing so often nowadays in the forms of maidens, women, men and children.<sup>36</sup>

But we might also point to a correspondingly increased interest in, and often fear of, demons and similar creatures during the time in question. This was the period during which the Platonic idea of *daemones* as mediators increasingly developed into various middle Platonic and Neoplatonic stratifications of entities of different levels of materiality – and therefore, according to some philosophers, different levels of corruption and potential to corrupt. Fear of the effects that the lowest of these levels could have upon humans comes out strongly in theurgic sources and undoubtedly also found its way into the great melting pot of ideas from which the authors of the magical papyri drew.<sup>37</sup> Fear of demonic entities is attested in more popular sources as well, however, which also contributed to the background from which the magical papyri and theurgic sources drew. The Greek *Testament of Solomon*, which probably dates to the first century AD, presents a long and detailed list of demons, their specific modes of attack on humans and the ways to avert them, for example, as does the second-century AD *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs*. The *Apocalypse of Adam* (composed at some point between the first and fourth centuries AD) presents even Solomon – the greatest of ancient magicians – as being liable to demonic deception: he asks the demons under his control to bring him the special virgin on which the Redeemer can be sired, and they bring him a different girl altogether.<sup>38</sup> These works and others like them reflect heightened concerns, especially among those who practised magic, that demons lay in wait to trick the unwary.

This leads us to another question, however: what gave magicians and theurgists confidence that they were able to avoid such deception by making sure that they saw the agents of divination, and that those

36 On Alexandra's inquiry, see A. Rehm and R. Harder, *Didyma II: Die Inschriften* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1958), no. 496, and R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1986), pp. 102–4; cf. J. Fontenrose, *Didyma: Apollo's Oracle, Cult and Companions*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), catalogue nos. 46–8, and for Clarian examples, R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, 'Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 27 (1996), pp. 1–54, repr. in R. Merkelbach, *Philologica: Ausgewählte Kleine Schriften* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1997), pp. 155–218 catalogue nos. 25–8.

37 S. I. Johnston, *Hekate Soteira* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 134–42.

38 *ApocAd.* 7.13–16.

agents really *were* who they said they were? What did the magicians and theurgists think distinguished them from people of earlier periods, who usually had to be content with receiving mere signs from the gods or at best with hearing Apollo's voice conveyed through human lips?

At least part of the answer lies in the fact that both the theurgist and the magician understood themselves to have been initiated into mysteries. The words *mystêria*, *teletê* and their cognates are found often in these texts, and we have a fair amount of detail about some of the initiatory procedures.<sup>39</sup> Even where we do not find specific evidence for initiation in a particular divinatory text, we often suspect that it was presumed to take place before the spell began, given that the longer, more elaborate divinatory procedures of the papyri are preceded by rituals that initiate the magician before he goes further. A good example of this is *PGM* IV.26–51, which is entitled 'initiation' (*teletê*). Most of this spell comprises an elaborate ritual of self-purification; the final part is a recipe for eye ointment, which implies that after the initiation is over, the magician expects to see something very special – I think we must assume it is a god.

Closeness to the gods, even personal acquaintance with the gods, was understood as a defining characteristic of mysteries from their inception. To take just a few familiar examples of this: it is articulated by the promise that owners of the Bacchic gold tablets will join the gods and heroes in the Underworld; it is signified on the Lovatelli urn by an initiate touching the snake on Demeter's lap; it is articulated by Isis when she promises that Lucius will see her again, face to face, in the Underworld as he sees her while alive in his dreams.<sup>40</sup> The magicians and theurgists expected that their own initiations would provide the same advantage of personal relationship with the gods – they just went a pragmatic step further in making divinatory use of that relationship.

39 *Teletê* and cognates used in the sense of mystery initiation: e.g. *PGM* IV.2205, XIII.889 and throughout XIII.1–343 (the 'Eighth Book of Moses'). A full list of places where the term *mystêrion* or cognates appear in the magical papyri is in H. D. Betz, 'Magic and ystery in the Greek magical papyri', in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds), *Magika Hiera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 244–59. *Mystêrion*, *teletê* and cognates in theurgy: e.g. *Chaldean Oracle* fr. 132.2; *Julian Or.* 5 172d–173a (quoting *Chaldean Oracle* fr. 194); *Proc. In Cr.* 51, 26–30 (commenting on *Chaldean Oracle* fr. 8); *In Cr.* 101, 3–8 (quoting *Chaldean Oracle* fr. 133); *Proc. In R.* I, 111, 1–2 (quoting *Chaldean Oracle* fr. 146); *Proc. In Alc.* 17–18 [40, 1–7 Cr.] W (quoting *Chaldean Oracle* fr. 135); Psellus at Migne *PG* 122, 1129c12–d4 (quoting *Chaldean Oracle* fr. 110).

40 Lovatelli urn: see illustrations in W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pls 2–4; gold tablets: see F. Graf and S. I. Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 94–136; Isis: *Apul. Met.* 11.6.

There are a few exceptions to that last statement, which might help to prove the larger point – that is, there are a few cases of initiation undertaken in preparation of divinatory procedures that lie outside of theurgic and magical venues. During the imperial period and perhaps earlier, one had to be initiated before consulting Trophonios and one could choose to be initiated before consulting the oracles at Didyma and Klaros as well, which probably gave the inquirer special privileges such as access to interior parts of the temples.<sup>41</sup> The case of Trophonios' oracle is especially interesting, given that our sources hint that the inquirers expected to meet the god face to face there, and that the sight was daunting enough to prevent them from laughing for a long time afterwards.<sup>42</sup> This gives us a parallel not only for initiation preceding divinatory encounters with the gods in magic and theurgy, but also for the cases I discussed earlier in which a magician pre-emptively asks the god whom he is invoking to appear in a form that is pleasant, rather than frightening.

From earliest times, initiation into mysteries typically guaranteed not only a close encounter with a god or gods, but immunity from demonic problems as well; we hear in many sources about initiates having to confront and overcome an '*empousa*' or something similar that threatened to impede completion of the initiation ceremony and consequently of later passage into a happy afterlife.<sup>43</sup> Iamblichus makes it clear that demonic impediment was a concern during theurgic initiation as well, although the demons threatened not so much (or

41 For Trophonios, see P. Bonnechère, 'Trophonios of Lebadea: mystery aspects of an oracular cult in Boeotia', in M. B. Cosmopoulos (ed.), *Greek Mysteries* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 169–92. For Klaros and Didyma, see F. Graf, 'Lesser mysteries: not less mysterious', in Cosmopoulos, *Greek Mysteries*, pp. 241–62.

42 Paus. 9.39.13; Philost. *VA* 8.19; Zen. 5.61 = *Paroemiogr.* I, 72.

43 Demonic entities confronted and overcome during Eleusinian initiations: Ar. *Ra.* 293, Lucian, *Cat.* 22, Procl. *In Alc.* 340, 1, and also the several mentions of initiates seeing something 'frightening' as part of the process (Aristid. 22.3 p. 28 and 41.10 p. 333 Keil; Demetr. *Eloc.* chpt. 100; Plu. fr. 178; Proc. *Theol. Plat.* 3.18 p. 151 Portus and also *In Alc.* 340.1). See also the late first-century decree discussed by K. Clinton, *The Sacred Official of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974), pp. 56–7; F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), pp. 126–39; K. Clinton, *Myth and Cult: The Iconography of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Stockholm: Paul Åström, 1992), pp. 84–7. Confrontations during Dionysiac and other mystery initiations: D. 18.130; *PDerv* col. 6; R. Seaford, 'Dionysiac drama and the Dionysiac mysteries', *CQ* 31 (1981), pp. 254–63; C. Brown, 'Empousa, Dionysus and the mysteries: Aristophanes, *Frogs* 285 ff.', *CQ* 41 (1991), pp. 41–50. On the topic as a whole, S. I. Johnston, *Restless Dead* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 129–39.

not only) the theurgists' eschatological hopes as they did the hopes of purifying and improving their souls in the here and now.<sup>44</sup>

On the one hand, the magicians and theurgists who used the divinatory spells I have described in this chapter must be understood as situated firmly within their own time. They expressed, albeit in an unusually proactive manner, the same heightened interest in what a god was and the same heightened concerns about demons as did many other individuals of the imperial age. On the other hand, these men distinguished themselves from their contemporaries both by their avowed pragmatism (they expected to accrue specific benefits, material or spiritual, from their heightened discernment of what gods and demons were) and by their resourcefulness in innovating upon well-established religious traditions (they restyled the centuries'-old practice of initiation into mysteries so as to profit in ways that no hierophant of the classical period could have imagined). It is no surprise, then, that although, across time and cultures, people have always created their gods,<sup>45</sup> the magician and theurgist became particularly sophisticated at doing so: their gods had high expectations to meet.

44 Iamb. *Myst.* 3.31, 178.8–16.

45 The cognitive scientists who have recently explored this idea – e.g. P. Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2001) – follow in a long line of predecessors that leads back at least as far as Xenophanes B 15 and 16 DK.

# THE GODS IN LATER ORPHISM

*Alberto Bernabé*

## INTRODUCING ORPHISM

The title of this chapter includes two concepts which require explanation, since they are not self-evident: 'later' and 'Orphism'. On the one hand, we must start from the assumption that what we call Orphism is not a doctrinal system, unique, dogmatic and always coherent.<sup>1</sup> Various authors decided to ascribe their own poems to Orpheus, a mythical character, in order to give them the prestige of a great name and the status of revealed texts, which would consequently be true.<sup>2</sup> Since they are authors from different times and even with different ideas, we may suppose that the doctrine found in different passages of the Orphic corpus will not be one and the same. Yet this tendency to variety and ideological dispersion is counterweighed by the fact that the name of the mythical poet was associated with specific themes (eschatology, the origin and destiny of the soul, salvation). Therefore, it was not possible to attribute to Orpheus any doctrine whatsoever, and even less to attribute any doctrines which contradicted those contained in other poems of the corpus. That is the reason why, in spite of the variety of answers to some questions which is found in poems of different times, we will also find some ideas in the poetry ascribed to Orpheus which remain practically unaltered across the centuries.

On the other hand, 'later' is an imprecise concept, since it is defined

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- 1 R. Parker, 'Early Orphism', in A. Powell (ed.), *The Greek World* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 483-510; A. Bernabé, 'La tradizione orfica della Grecia classica al Neoplatonismo', in G. Sfameni Gasparro (ed.), *Modi di comunicazione tra il divino e l'umano* (Cosenza: Lionello Giordano, 2005), pp. 107-50; A. Bernabé and F. Casadesús (eds), *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: un reencuentro* (Madrid: Akal, 2008).
- 2 A. Bernabé, 'Orfeo, de personaje del mito a autor literario', *Ítaca* 18 (2002), pp. 61-78.

in relation to a previous moment. If the previous moment is Homer, for example, then all Orphism is later, so it becomes necessary to give a more precise definition of the temporal scope of this chapter. But that task is problematic because many Orphic works have not been dated with precision and, even when they have, it is a typical feature of Orphic tradition that it is repeatedly re-elaborated, so that in later works we find characters and ideas which have come from much earlier times. Yet these ideas and characters will not always maintain the same functions and meanings that they had in their first formulations.

We find the most important evidence for Orphic gods in the fragments of theogonies. Damascius, a Neoplatonic philosopher (sixth century AD), gives evidence for the existence of three distinct Orphic theogonies, although it is clear that in his time only one could be read, ‘these current *Rhapsodies*’, a poem also called *Hieroi Logoi in 24 Rhapsodies*, that is usually dated to the first century BC.<sup>3</sup> The other theogonies mentioned by Damascius are ‘the one current according to Hieronymus – and Hellanicus, if he is not the same person’ (a poem dated to the second century BC)<sup>4</sup> and ‘the theology recorded in the Peripatetic Eudemus as being that of Orpheus’ (which must be earlier than the disciple of Aristotle, probably about 400 BC).<sup>5</sup> Another Orphic theogony became known to scholars when the fourth-century BC Derveni papyrus was found.<sup>6</sup> But it is important to note that the later versions use very ancient materials. These theogonies were the theological basis for the Orphic ideas about gods, the world, and the role of the human beings in it.

The theogonies that I focus on in this chapter are the so-called *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus* and the *Rhapsodies*; also treated are other works more difficult to date but which do not belong anyway to classical times. Sometimes I mention earlier texts, since they are the basis of later beliefs, such as the bone tablets from Olbia<sup>7</sup> and the gold tablets,<sup>8</sup> although both the Olbia texts and the oldest gold

3 A. Bernabé (ed.), *Poetae epici graeci: testimonia et fragmenta*, Pars II, fasc. 1, *Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta* (Munich and Leipzig: Saur, 2004), pp. 97–292 (fragments 90–359). I will cite this as *OF* followed by fragment number.

4 *OF* 69–89.

5 *OF* 19–27.

6 *OF* 2–18. Cf. the complete edition of Papyri in *Poetae Epici Graeci Testimonia et fragmenta*, Pars II fasc. 3, Musaeus, Linus, Epimenides, Papyrus Derveni, Indices (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2007).

7 These are three little bone tablets found in Olbia (also called Borysthene), near the Dniepr river, in which brief slogans are written such as ‘life-death-life, truth, Dionysos, Orphics’. See the texts, commentaries and bibliography in *OF* 463–5.

8 These are a series of gold tablets of very small dimension, most of them dated between 400 and 200 BC and found in graves in Magna Graecia, Thessaly,

leaf, that of Hipponion, come from the fifth century BC, which can by no means be considered 'later Orphism'.

In general, however, classical texts such as the fourth-century BC Derveni Papyri, the roughly contemporary *Eudemian Theogony* and the somewhat later panorama reflected by Plato are not covered in this chapter.<sup>9</sup> On the other side of its temporal limits are the gods of 'latest Orphism'. Thus, I leave aside the collection of *Orphic Hymns*, which have been recently discussed in excellent studies by Ricciardelli and Morand,<sup>10</sup> as well as the *Orphic Argonautica*, which have nothing Orphic but the fact that Orpheus has been taken as an eyewitness who narrates the voyage in the first person singular. Nor do I dwell on the pseudo-scientific works of the imperial age, such as the *Dodekaeterides* and the *Ephemerides*, in which the name of Orpheus is only a *nom de prestige*, or on the *Testament of Orpheus*, in which the image of the One and Only God is not Orphic, but Jewish.<sup>11</sup>

### THE MAIN FEATURES OF ORPHIC GODS

The gods of Orphism are by and large not new gods; they bear the traditional names of the gods of Olympian religion. There are, however, several distinctive features: first, a tendency to identification between gods; secondly, the nature of their relationship with the cosmos; and finally, the peculiar relationship between gods and men.

The first of these, the tendency to identification between gods, is the most marked. This identification takes place through different mechanisms.

(1) It is repeated several times that god A is simply the same as B, or both names are presented as if they were a succession of epithets, or even one god may be given a lineage which clearly belongs to another. Thus in the *Rhapsodies* 'Pluto, Euphrosyne and powerful

(footnote 8 *continued*)

Macedonia and Crete. They contain brief texts in verse, mainly dactylic hexameters, about the other world: either indications about its 'geography', greetings to the infernal gods, wishes that the soul of the deceased may find happiness in the Beyond, or else suggestions for help in finding it. Cf. the edition of and commentary on these texts with a complete bibliography in A. Bernabé and A. I. Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld: The Orphic Gold Tablets* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), and *OF* 474–96.

9 The theogony contained in the Derveni Papyrus will be treated by Richard Janko elsewhere.

10 G. Ricciardelli, *Inni Orfici* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 2000); A. F. Morand, *Etudes sur les Hymnes orphiques* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

11 C. Riedweg, *Jüdisch-hellenische Imitation eines orphischen Hieros Logos* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1993).



Bendis' are names of Artemis (*OF* 258), and Hekate is mentioned as daughter of Leto, through which she is identified with Artemis (*OF* 317). But in one fragment *incerti operis* it is said that Hekate is daughter of Deo, which assimilates her to Persephone (*OF* 400). A piece of news which probably comes from the *Rhapsodies* may lie behind the statement of the tenth-century author Iohannes Galenus that the goddess Artemis is to be identified with Tyche, Selene and Hekate.<sup>12</sup>

(2) Sometimes one deity takes the name of another because of a specific event which explains the new name. This is the case with Rhea, who can receive the name of Demeter (and therefore be identified with this goddess) when she becomes mother of Zeus,<sup>13</sup> following an etymological procedure which is also employed to explain epithets of a single deity, like Pallas from *πάλλειν*.<sup>14</sup>

(3) In some cases it is just the etymology, without the need to refer to a specific event, that helps syncretism. So in an Orphic hymn to Demeter the goddess is identified with *Ge mêtêr*, 'Mother Earth' (*OF* 399).

(4) In other cases we find that the same deities are born more than once, and therefore they appear in different generations. Thus in the *Rhapsodies* we have two generations of Moirai,<sup>15</sup> before and after the swallowing of Phanes by Zeus; two Aphrodites,<sup>16</sup> and even three Nights.<sup>17</sup> A notable case is that of Dionysos, who is first born of Persephone;<sup>18</sup> then he is dismembered by the Titans (*OF* 301–17); afterwards he is conceived again through the ingestion of his heart by Semele (*OF* 327); and finally, after her death by lightning, Zeus introduces him into his thigh to finish his pregnancy (*OF* 328), until he is born again.

(5) The possibility that a god is born more than once allows us to suppose also that divinities with different names are avatars, second births, reincarnations or alternative identities of previous ones. A dubious case is Proclus' identification of Kronos with his ancestor Chronos (Time) in *OF* 109, since we do not know whether the philosopher is giving his own interpretation, or whether this idea was expressed or suggested in the *Rhapsodies*. In other cases the identity

12 Iohannes Galenus, *All. Hes. Th.* 441 (*OF* 356).

13 *OF* 206 *Ῥεῖη τὸ πρῶν εὐδῶσα, ἔπει Διὸς ἐπλετο μήτηρ, / Δημήτηρ γέγονε.*

14 Clem. Al. *Prot.* 2.18.1 (*OF* 315 I).

15 Procl. in *R.* 2.207.24 (*OF* 176).

16 *OF* 189 and 260.

17 Herm. in *Phdr.* 154.17 (*OF* 113 IV, 147 II, 246 I). Cf. A. Bernabé, 'Las Noches en las Rapsodias órficas', in *Actas del IX Congreso de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Clásicos* (Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 1998) V, pp. 71–6.

18 Diod. 5.75.4 (*OF* 283 I).

of epithets and designations of two gods indicates that the ‘younger’ one could be a sort of reappearance or reincarnation of the other. That could be the case with the expression *πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν θεῶν τε*, which is applied first to Kronos in *OF* 241 and then to Zeus in *OF* 244. It is even more clearly the case in *OF* 141, where Phanes is given an epithet, *Βρόμιος*, which is typical of Dionysos, and then he is called ‘Zeus who sees everything’, in addition to being identified with Eros and Metis:<sup>19</sup>

᾿Πρωτόγονος Βρόμιος τε μέγας καὶ Ζεὺς ὁ πανόπτης  
ἔστι καὶ ἀβρὸς Ἔρως καὶ Μῆτις ἀτάσθαλος <δαίμων>.

He is Protogonos, great Bromios, and Zeus who sees everything, and graceful Eros, and Metis, reckless daimon.

This unique fact was observed by Brisson and subsequently by Parker, who notes, ‘the Orphic myth of succession in heaven takes on a new colour if Protogonos and Zeus and Dionysos are in some sense the same god, if Zeus was implicit in Protogonos and Protogonos reincarnated in Dionysos’.<sup>20</sup>

This, I am convinced, is the only possible explanation of the passage. Let us not forget that to swallow another god (*OF* 85) is a way of assimilating him. In this light we may suggest that in the *Rhapsodies* (*OF* 200) Kronos’ *κατάποσις* (‘swallowing’) is a failed attempt to integrate his sons into his own ‘womb’ in order to make them ‘his’ and avoid being dethroned. Zeus, who is wiser, swallows and integrates into himself not his descendants but a more distant ancestor, Phanes, which makes him the only god (*OF* 241) and so ancestor and descendant of himself. The situation is clearly expressed in a hymn to Kronos, whose date is difficult to establish (*OF* 690):

υἱὲ Διὸς μέγαλοιο, πάτερ Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.

Son of great Zeus, father of aegis-bearing Zeus.

19 Phanes, also called Protogonos, ‘first-born’, and identified with Eros and Metis, is a particular god of the Orphics, son of Time (Χρόνος) and father of Heaven (Οὐρανός) and Earth (Γῆ). See § 3.

20 L. Brisson, ‘Proclus et l’orphisme’, in J. Pépin and H. D. Saffrey (eds), *Proclus lecteur et interprète des anciens* (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la recherche scientifique, 1987), pp. 43–103 at 57: ‘aussi peut-on dire qu’en Phanes préexistaient le grand Bromios et Zeus qui voit tout’; Parker, ‘Early Orphism’, pp. 493–4.

Kronos is father of Zeus, but when Zeus swallows Phanes, he makes all gods come back into his 'womb' to give birth to them again, so that his father Kronos is now his son, because he is born again from his own belly. The theme can be found *in nuce* already in Hesiod, where the constant alterations of the normal order of generations are merely attempts to break the normal line of succession.<sup>21</sup>

The breaking of normal succession also affects the relation of Dionysos with Zeus in the *Rhapsodies*. Dionysos does not replace Zeus, since Zeus still has the power when his son has received kingship from him (*OF* 299). Thus we can read in *OF* 300:

κραῖνε μὲν οὖν Ζεὺς πάντα πατήρ, Βάκχος δ' ἐπέκραινε.

All was ruled by father Zeus, but Bakchos exercised the rule.

West explains this fact as the 'reconciliation of Dionysos' kingship with Zeus' continuing power'.<sup>22</sup> Yet it can only be because Zeus has previously broken the normal line of succession that it was possible for this to happen.

In the last centuries of Orphic tradition, syncretism between gods was intensified, and we find, for example, an inscription in Rome which mentions a

Διὶ Ἡλίῳ Μίθρῳ Φάνητι ἱερεὺς καὶ πατήρ

Priest and Father of Zeus, Helios, Mithra, Phanes.<sup>23</sup>

A second feature of Orphic gods is the modification of their relations with the cosmos. In the traditional, Hesiodic, vision, the cosmos was generated in an almost automatic way, and only when it is formed do the anthropomorphic gods appear on the stage. At the end of their line is the definitive king of them all, Zeus. Among the Orphics, however, there are various alternative scenarios, which are probably related to different philosophical schools, with which Orphic poetry

21 Cf. A. Bernabé, 'Generaciones de dioses y sucesión interrumpida: el mito hitita de Kumarbi, la *Teogonia* de Hesíodo y el *Papiro de Derveni*', *Aula Orientalis* 7 (1989), pp. 159–79.

22 M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 267.

23 An inscription found in Rome (third century AD) and edited by F. Cumont, 'Mithra et l'orphisme', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 109 (1934), pp. 63–72; cf. M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus inscriptionum et Monumentum Religionis Mithriacae*, 2 vols (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956–60) n. 475 (*OF* 678); M. Herrero, *Tradición órfica y cristianismo antiguo* (Madrid: Trotta, 2007), p. 59.

maintains a particular osmotic relation, in which it both receives and exercises ideological influences.<sup>24</sup>

(1) On the one hand, there are the demiurgic gods, that is to say creators or, rather, rational organizers of the cosmos. In the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus* and in the *Rhapsodies*, the first to appear is Phanes, followed by Zeus. The demiurgic character of these gods is evident through the use of a verb which is already present in the Derveni Papyrus, the verb μήσατο, which means both to ‘conceive’ in a biological sense as a female entity, and to ‘conceive’ intellectually.<sup>25</sup>

(2) Secondly, we have notable instances of the doctrine of a god who is identified with the world, that is, a kind of pantheism. It seems that we could find an antecedent of this development in an indirect testimony of the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus*, in which Damascius tells us that Zeus is identified with the god Pan:

καὶ Δία καλεῖ πάντων διατάκτορα καὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, διὸ καὶ  
Πᾶνα καλεῖσθαι.<sup>26</sup>

And it calls him Zeus the orderer of all and < > of the whole world, wherefore he is also called Pan.

This seems to be a pun on Πᾶν ‘the universe’. The idea is consistent with the images of the god Pan with the Zodiac, which are best interpreted as representing the universe.<sup>27</sup> But the clearest examples are to be found in the later Stoic-influenced versions of the hymn to Zeus (*OF* 243). In these versions of the poem the universe is defined as the body of Zeus, even if this particular presentation is not devoid of paradoxes. The first paradox is the apparent inconsistency of the juxtaposition in the *Rhapsodies* of this conception, the body of Zeus as the universe, with the other in which Zeus is *demiurge* of the cosmos. The second paradox is that the aim of the poem seems to be to present

24 Cf. A. Bernabé, *Textos órficos y filosofía presocrática: materiales para una comparación* (Madrid: Trotta, 2004), and *Platón y el orfismo: diálogos entre religión y filosofía* (Madrid: Abada, 2010); F. Casadesús, ‘Adaptaciones e interpretaciones estoicas de los poemas de Orfeo’, in A. Alvar Ezquerro and J. F. González Castro (eds), *Actas del XI Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos* (Madrid: SEEC, 2005), I, pp. 309–18.

25 G. Scalera McClintock, ‘La teogonia di Protogono nel *Papiro Derveni*: una interpretazione dell’orfismo’, *Filosofia e Teologia* 2 (1984), pp. 139–49 at 143; L. Tarán, ‘the creation myth in Plato’s *Timaeus*’, in J. P. Anton and G. L. Kustas (eds), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971), pp. 372–407 at 407 n. 162.

26 Damasc. *De princ.* 123 bis (III 162.15 Westerink = *OF* 86), tr. M. L. West.

27 H. G. Gundel, *Zodiakos: Der Tierkreis in der antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Munich: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1972), nn. 163–6; J. Boardman, ‘Pan’, *LIMC* VIII 1 (1997), p. 930 n. 141.

a deity identified with the cosmos, but the deity is not described as non-anthropomorphic. On the contrary, it is the cosmos which is made anthropomorphic: Zeus' head is sky, his hair is the stars, his intelligence is aether and so on.<sup>28</sup>

πάντα γὰρ ἐν μεγάλῳι Ζητὸς τάδε σώματι κεῖται.  
τοῦ δὴ τοι κεφαλὴ μὲν ἰδεῖν καὶ καλὰ πρόσωπα  
οὐρανὸς αἰγλήεις, ὃν χρύσειαι ἀμφὶς ἔθειραι  
ἄστρον μαρμαρέων περικαλλέες ἡρέθονται,

νοῦς δέ οἱ ἀψευδὴς βασιλῆϊος ἄφθιτος αἰθήρ,  
ὃῖ δὴ πάντα κλύει καὶ φράζεται· 17

σῶμα δέ οἱ περιφεγγές, ἀπείριτον, ἀστυφέλικτον,  
ἄτρομον, ὀβριμόγυιον, ὑπερμενὲς ὧδε τέτυκται.<sup>29</sup> 22

For in Zeus' mighty body these all lie.  
His head and beauteous face the radiant heaven  
reveals, and round him the golden tresses  
of the twinkling stars, very beautiful, float.

His mind immortal aether, sovereign truth,  
with which he hears and considers all.

His radiant body, boundless, undisturbed,  
fearless, in strength of mighty limbs was formed thus.

A papyrus from Florence shows another version, apparently more recent and more tainted with Stoicism, especially in a categorical Ζεὺς δὲ [τὰ πάντα]:<sup>30</sup>

[ἐξ Ὀρφικῶν]  
[Ζεὺς] πάντων ἀρχή, Ζεὺς [μέσσα, Ζεὺς δὲ τε]λευτή·  
Ζεὺς ὕπατος, [Ζεὺς καὶ χθόνι]ος καὶ πόντιός ἐστιν,  
[Ζεὺς ἄρσην,] Ζεὺς θῆλυς  
πάλιν

28 *OF* 243.10ff, tr. E. H. Gifford with some corrections.

29 A similar, briefer description can be found in *OF* 861.

30 *Papiri della Società Italiana* XV 1476, fr. 2, col. I 511; cf. G. Bastianini, 'Euripide e Orfeo in un papiro fiorentino (*PSI* XV 1476)', in G. Bastianini and A. Casanova (eds), *Euripide e i papiri* (Florence: Istituto Papirologico 'G. Vitelli', 2005), pp. 227–42 at 235ff (*OF* 688a, *addenda et corrigenda* fasc. 3); A. Bernabé, 'Are the Orphic verses quoted in *Papiri della Società Italiana* XV 1476 and in Diogenes of Babylon *SVF* 33 references to a same work?', *Cronache Ercolanesi* 38 (2008), pp. 97–101.

Zeὺς δὲ [τὰ πάντα,]  
 [πά]ντα κύκλῳ φαίνων, [Zeὺς ἀρχή, μέσσα,] τ[ε]λευτή· 5  
 καὶ δύναται [Zeὺς πᾶν, Zeὺς π]ᾶ[ν] ἔχει αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

From the Orphics:

Zeus is the beginning, Zeus the middle, Zeus the  
 accomplishment of all things,  
 Zeus magnificent, Zeus is subterranean and marine,  
 Zeus male, Zeus female,  
 and then,  

Zeus is all things,

 he who makes appear all things in a cycle, Zeus beginning,  
 middle, and accomplishment,  
 and Zeus is all almighty, Zeus has everything within himself.

Finally it is interesting to cite two verses of an odd poem, quoted by Philostratus:<sup>31</sup>

Zeῦ κύδιστε, μέγιστε θεῶν, εἰλυμένε κόπρῳ  
 μηλείῃ τε καὶ ἵππείῃ καὶ ἡμιονείῃ.

Zeus the noblest, the mightiest of gods, enfolded by ordure  
 of sheep, of horse, and of mule.

The verses probably parody a text like:

Zeῦ κύδιστε, μέγιστε θεῶν, εἰλυμένε κόσμῳ

Zeus the noblest, the mightiest of gods, enfolded by universe.<sup>32</sup>

(3) Thirdly, among the literature attributed to Orpheus, we also have interpretations of an allegorical or naturalist kind, which identify each god with natural principles or as allegories of other realities. Thus Dionysos appears three times in the *Rhapsodies* with the name Οἶνος (OF 303, 321, 331), which means that he is considered an allegory of wine. A particularly clear example of interpretations of this kind is the so-called *Mikroteros krater* (OF 413–16). In one of the fragments of this poem (OF 413) it can be read that Hephaistos is the fire, Demeter the grain, Poseidon the sea and so on:

31 Philostr. *Her.* 25.2 (28.3 De Lannoy, OF 848).

32 See the commentary to OF 484.

Ἑρμῆς δ' ἑρμηνεύς τῶν πάντων ἄγγελός ἐστι,  
 Νύμφαι ὕδωρ, πῦρ Ἥφαιστος, σίτος Δημήτηρ,  
 ἡ δὲ θάλασσα Ποσειδάων μέγας ἡδ' Ἐνοσίχθων·  
 καὶ πόλεμος μὲν Ἄρης, εἰρήνη δ' ἔστ' Ἀφροδίτη.  
 οἶνος, τὸν φιλέουσι θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ' ἄνθρωποι,  
 ὃν τε βροτοῖς εὖρεν λυπῶν κηλήτορα πασῶν  
 ταυρογενῆς Διόνυσος ἐϋφροσύνην πόρε θνητοῖς  
 ἡδίστην πάσησι τ' ἐπ' εἰλαπίνῃσι πάρεστι,  
 καὶ Θέμις, ἥπερ ἅπασι θεμιστεύει τὰ δίκαια,  
 Ἥλιος, ὃν καλέουσιν Ἀπόλλωνα κλυτότοξον,  
 Φοῖβον ἐκηβελήτην, μάντιν πάντων ἐκάεργον,  
 ἡγήτορα νόσων, Ἀσκληπιόν. ἐν τάδε πάντα.

Hermes the interpreter is messenger of all;  
 Nymphai are the water, Hephaistos the fire, Demeter the grain.  
 Sea is the great Poseidon, the Earth-shaker,  
 war is Ares and peace is Aphrodite.  
 Wine, beloved by gods and mortal men,  
 which Dionysos, born as a bull, found  
 as charmer of all pains for humans and furnished  
 as the most pleasant cause of merriment for mortals, is present  
 in all banquets,  
 and Themis, who declares right law to all,  
 Helios, also called Apollo, renowned archer,  
 Phoibos far-shooting, accurate seer of all,  
 and Asklepios, healer of diseases, all that is one.

Sometimes it is not clear whether we have a naturalist interpretation or a pantheistic conception which would only appeal to naturalist explanations to support the idea that the different names of the gods are different manifestations of a single divine nature. In the last passage quoted that seems to be the case, since the last line says categorically: ἐν τάδε πάντα, 'all that is one'. And in another fragment of the same work (*OF* 416.4) we have the following solemn declaration:

εἷς δὲ πατήρ οὗτος πάντων, θηρῶν τε βροτῶν τε.

One is the father of all gods and mortal men.

Very rarely we find non-anthropomorphic formulations of the gods: one example is Ananke being ἀσώματος, 'without body', in the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus* (*OF* 77), which is quite

similar to an abstract formulation of the divinity; another instance is the Mother of the Gods, who according to Philodemus was considered shapeless by the Orphics.<sup>33</sup>

καίπ[ερ ἐν ἀρχαί]οις [θεολόγοις ἰε]ροῦ λ[όγου ὄντος] ἐκτι[θέντος  
 ``ἐστίν] ἄμορ[φον ἁ θεῶν] Μάτ[ηρ], καὶ ὁ τὸν] Φρυγί[ον λόγον  
 συν]τάξα[ς αὐτὴν λίθον] ποιεῖ.<sup>34</sup>

Although according to the ancient theological authors of a *Sacred discourse*, the Mother of the Gods is shapeless, and the composer of the Phrygian tale presents her as a stone.

Nevertheless, in this last case perhaps it is not so much a non-anthropomorphic formulation of the divinity as the reflection of a very primitive idea, in relation to archaic aniconic representations of this goddess.

Yet the most distinctive feature of Orphic religion is probably the special relation of the gods with human beings. A myth is recounted in the *Rhapsodies*, although it probably existed much earlier (cf. *OF* 34–9), according to which men were created from the burnt remains of the Titans, who had previously devoured Dionysos.<sup>35</sup> This story explains the dual character of human beings: they possess both an evil Titanic element and a positive Dionysiac one. The anthropogonic myth also implies the destiny of men and their possible reintegration into the divine nature from which they originally spring. This possibility, absolutely alien to the Olympian religion, is clearly proclaimed in the gold tablets:

*OF* 487.4 θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου.

You have been born a god, from the man that you were.

33 Philodem. *De piet.* in *P. Hercul.* 247 VI<sup>b</sup>, 11ff, p. 19 Gomperz; see also R. Philippson, 'Zu Philodems Schrift über die Frömmigkeit', *Hermes* 55 (1920), pp. 225–78 at 271; A. Schober, 'Philodemi περί εὐσεβείας libelli partem priorem restituit A. S.', dissertation, Königsberg, 1923; *Cronache Ercolanesi* 18 (1988), pp. 67–125 at 78 = *OF* 860a, in *add. et corr.*, fasc. 3.

34 Cf. Athenag. *Pro Christ.* 4.1 (82 Pouderon = *OF* 557) Διαγόραι μὲν (T 27 Winiarczyk) γὰρ εἰκότως ἀθεότητα ἐπεκάλουν Ἀθηναῖοι, μὴ μόνον τὸν Ὀρφικὸν εἰς μέσον κατατιθέντι λόγον καὶ τὰ ἐν Ἐλευσίνι καὶ τὰ τῶν Καβίρων δημεύοντι μυστήρια καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους ἵνα τὰς γογγύλας ἔψοι κατακόπτοντι ξόανον, ἀντικρὺς δὲ ἀποφαινομένοι μηδὲ ὅλως εἶναι θεόν.

35 A. Bernabé, 'La toile de Pénélope: a-t-il existé un mythe orphique sur Dionysos et les Titans?', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 219 (2002), pp. 401–33, *contra* R. Edmonds, 'Tearing apart the Zagreus myth: a few disparaging remarks on Orphism and Original Sin', *CLAnt* 18 (1999), pp. 35–73.



OF 488.9 ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῖο.

Happy and fortunate, you will be a god, from the mortal you were.

OF 491.4 νόμωι ἴθι δῖα γεγῶσα.

Come, legitimately transformed into a goddess.

Therefore the *mystes* declares that he belongs to the blessed lineage of the gods:

OF 488.3 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὐχομαι εἶμεν.<sup>36</sup>

Since I, too, boast that I belong to your blessed race.

This peculiar relation between gods and men explains the content of the *Rhapsodies*, a long tale which begins with a cosmogony and a theogony, then goes on to the creation of mankind out of the death by lightning of the Titans (OF 320), references to transmigration (OF 337–40) and descriptions of the afterlife (OF 341–4). They are all episodes of a single unitary story, of a single world-structure, in a cause-and-effect relation to each other.

### ‘NEW’ GODS

New gods in the Orphic sphere are scarce.<sup>37</sup> Some of them appear within the context of cosmogonies. In conformity with their new image of the world, Orphic poets invent a new cosmogony and theogony in which they include some new divine characters, such as Time, Ananke–Adrastea or Phanes.

Time is represented in the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus* as a winged and four-headed being, a kind of arch-animal, the prefiguration of all later animals, born from primordial waters. We do not know whether he had the same monstrous aspect in the *Rhapsodies* (cf. OF 109), since no explicit mention has been preserved about these details.

Time’s partner is Ananke (Inevitability), identified with Adrastea

<sup>36</sup> A similar verse can be read in OF 489.3 and 490.3.

<sup>37</sup> See A. F. Morand, ‘Orphic gods and other gods’, in A. B. Lloyd (ed.), *What is a God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity* (Duckworth: Classical Press of Wales, 1997), pp. 169–81.

(the inescapable).<sup>38</sup> Both names point to an unavoidable destiny, so that her union with Time represents the creation of a time subordinated to a rigid norm. Her abstract essence is referred to in the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus*, where she is said to be ἀσώματος, 'without body' (OF 77). We know nothing about her nature in the *Rhapsodies*, in which only a brief allusion (OF 110) calling her στυγερόπα τ' Ἀνάγκη, 'grim-faced Ananke', has been preserved.

Although Night had earlier appeared in the *Iliad* with a minimal role (Il. 14.259, 261) and with somewhat more relevance in Hesiod (*Th.* 20, 107, 123f, etc.), this goddess attains a major role in Orphic cosmogonies.<sup>39</sup> She is already a primordial deity in the *Derveni Theogony*, and she has a great prominence in the *Rhapsodies*. She takes an active part in the plot, that is, in different episodes of the divine struggles for power, since she predicts the future, gives advice on what should be done, and nurtures the new gods.<sup>40</sup>

The most characteristic deity among Orphic innovations is Phanes, which was formerly just an epithet for Dionysos (OF 60 and 492.3). His first appearance as an independent god occurs in the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus* (OF 80), where he is described as a kind of repetition of the character Time, but with the addition of some new elements: his shining body, which illuminates the world; the sexual element, since he is androgynous; and his essential feature of being the first-born, since Time is not engendered as such, whereas he is born from an egg. Thus Phanes inherits the old name Πρωτόγονος (First-born), applied to Uranus in the *Derveni Theogony* (OF 12)<sup>41</sup> and perhaps in a gold tablet from Thurii (OF 492.1).<sup>42</sup> In the *Rhapsodies* (OF 120–73), Phanes preserves these features, but they are better documented, which allows us to know a bit more about him. Thus, he is identified with Μῆτις, practical intelligence, and with Ἔρως, the principle of sexuality (OF 139–41). And if we must understand his epithet Ἡρικεπαῖος/Ἡρικαπαῖος (OF 134, 135, 139, 143) as a deformation of the first part of the name which Dionysos receives in a gold tablet from Pherai (OF 493), Ἀνδρικεπαιδός-θυρσον, then we must think that he assumes in himself the different ages: that of the child (παῖς) and that of an adult (ἄνθρωπος).<sup>43</sup> Besides, I have already pointed out that in OF 141

38 Cf. commentary on OF 77.

39 J. N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 4f.

40 OF 107, 112, 123.2, 147, 150, 164, 169, 177, 182, 209, 238, 246, 247. Indeed she is re-edited twice more in the *Rhapsodies*; see n. 16 above.

41 This statement is discussed in A. Bernabé, 'Autour de l'interprétation des colonnes XIII–XVI du Papyrus de Derveni', *Rhizai* 4.1 (2007), pp. 77–103.

42 Cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions*, p. 142.

43 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 155.

he is called Βρόμιος and he is identified with μέγας . . . Ζεὺς ὁ πανόπτης, as indicating that he is a prefiguration of both gods (see above).

Both in the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus* (OF 85) and in the *Rhapsodies* (OF 240–1) Zeus swallows Phanes, and through that swallowing not only does he acquire all the qualities of the first-born god, but he also becomes, furthermore, his own ancestor. On the other hand, the androgynous character of his ancestor allows Zeus to have a masculine, generative power, and a feminine womb, which is fertile and able to conceive.

There are also new gods such as Hipta (OF 329), probably an echo of the Middle Eastern Hebat,<sup>44</sup> or Bendis, a Thracian deity identified with Artemis (OF 258).<sup>45</sup> And within the framework of the new ideas of retribution and reincarnation, new personifications are developed (though the procedure is of course Hesiodic), which usually appear in the eschatological dimension, as for instance Justice, Dike (OF 233, 248, 252.2), or Dikaio syne and the daughter of the latter, Amoibe, compensation in the afterlife (OF 717.124). In a way Mnemosyne too is a sort of personification with a new role, that of reminding the initiate what he was taught when he was alive to avoid taking the wrong way in his journey through the other world, in the afterlife topography presented in the gold leaves (OF 415.2, 474.1, 474.6, 474.14, etc.).<sup>46</sup>

## GODS WITH A SPECIAL PROMINENCE

Other gods are not new but acquire some different features and a distinctive importance in an Orphic context.

### 1 Zeus

In Orphism Zeus is doubtlessly the supreme and almost unique deity, with an important cosmogonic role as creator god. By swallowing Phanes (OF 85, 20f), he becomes his own ancestor, both creator and engenderer, with the roles of mother and father at the same time. By copulating with his mother and afterwards with the daughter born from his first incest, he completely subverts the line of divine generations, and he manages to belong to three generations at the same time: that of Rhea, his own, and Persephone's. From that whole process he turns out to be a deity who breaks the order of divine successions and

44 West, *Orphic Poems*, p. 96, cf. also Ricciardelli, *Inni*, p. 421–2; Morand, *Etudes*, pp. 174–81.

45 Cf. commentary on OF 258.

46 Cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions*, pp. 15–19.

parenthoods, blurs the boundaries between gender roles by assuming masculine and feminine functions, and is demiurge of the cosmos and/or identical with it. On the other hand, he does not seem to have an important role in relation to human beings and their salvation. One could say that he is above all that.

## 2 Dionysos and Persephone

In contrast to Zeus, Dionysos and Persephone do have a deep relation with human salvation. In the case of Dionysos, his insertion into the myth of divine successions (*OF* 296) is a novelty because it is ignored by Hesiod; furthermore, Dionysos enters it in a special situation, that of a god who dies and resurrects or, if we want to put it in a different way, is dismembered and reconstituted. His tomb in the Parnassus shows him as a mortal, but he is then returned to his divine condition (*OF* 323–6).<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, the bone tablets from Olbia connect him with a doctrine of life after death (*OF* 464–6),<sup>48</sup> and the gold tablets mention him in relation to the liberation of the souls, under the names of Bakchios (*OF* 485–6.2), Dionysos Bakchios (*OF* 496n), Andrikepaidothyrsos (*OF* 493) and Eubouleus (*OF* 488–91.2), while the *Gurôb Papyrus* proclaims his unity in the context of a τελετή<sup>49</sup> (*OF* 578.23b: εἰς Διόνυσος) and calls him also Εὐβουλεύς (*OF* 578.18, maybe 22a) and Ἰουκεπαῖγε (22a).<sup>50</sup> The myth of the origin of human beings from the ashes of the Titans, who had previously devoured Dionysos, implies that in human beings a part of the god himself survives. Therefore Dionysos appears as a deity with whom his

47 Tzetz. *ad Lyc.* 208 (cf. Call. fr. 643 Pf. and Euph. fr. 13 De Cuenca = *OF* 36). About Dionysos' tomb in Parnassos, cf. Philochoros *FGrH* 328 F 7; Pfeiffer's note on Call. *l. c.*; and M. Piérart, 'Le tombeau de Dionysos à Delphes', in C. Bodelot et al. (eds), Πουκίλα: *Hommage à Othon Scholer* (Luxembourg: Publications du Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg, 1996), pp. 137–54.

48 Cf. L. Dubois, *Inscriptions grecques dialectales d'Olbia du Pont* (Geneva: Droz, 1996) n. 49a (*OF* 463): βίος-θάνατος-βίος | ἀλήθεια | Διόνυσος) Ὀρφικοί.

49 The term τελετή is often translated as 'initiation', but it is much more than that, since it includes different types of rituals, not only those of initiates, generally related to the mysteries and to the destiny of the soul in the Netherworld. About τελετή, cf. G. Sfameni Gasparro, 'Ancora sul temine τελετή: osservazioni storico-religiose', in C. Questa (ed.), *Filologia e forme letterarie: Studi offerti a Francesco della Corte* (Urbino: Università degli Studi, 1988) V, pp. 137–52 = *Misteri e teologia: per la storia dei culti mistici e misterici nel mondo antico* (Cosenza: Lionello Giordano, 2003), pp. 99–117; A. I. Jiménez San Cristóbal, 'Consideraciones sobre las τελεταί ὀρφικά', in *Actas del X Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos* (Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 2002), III, pp. 127–33.

50 I.e. Ἰουκεπαῖε, cf. p. 434. *Gurôb Papyrus*: J. Hordern, 'Notes on the Orphic Papyrus from Gurôb (*P. Gurôb* 1: Pack<sup>2</sup> 2464)', *ZPE* 129 (2000), pp. 131–40.

devotees can be identified, as can be seen in the fact that the god is called Bakchios (*OF* 485.2, 486.2, 496n, worshipped in Olbia according to Herodotus 4.78 [*OF* 563]), the name that should correspond to the *mystai*, and, on the other hand, some human μῦσται are called βάκχοι, the word which should define the god, in the gold leaf from Hipponion (*OF* 474.16).<sup>51</sup>

Let us now turn to Persephone. She appears in the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus* and in the *Rhapsodies* as a monstrous being with whom Zeus copulates in the form of a snake (*OF* 88–9, 280–1), and she is the main character of some hymns attributed to Orpheus in an Eleusinian context (*OF* 379–402). In the gold tablets she has a primordial role, as a very different character from the ‘terrible’ (ἐπαινὴ) and unimportant goddess mentioned by Homer and Hesiod.<sup>52</sup> She appears as Lady of Hades, who controls the access to the Meadows of the Blessed, before whom initiates come as suppliants and to whom they address their declarations of purity and liberation. In the τελετή of the Gurôb Papyrus she appears under the epithet Brimo.

Persephone and Dionysos, mother and son according to the Orphic myth, are often mentioned together. Thus is the case in the declaration of the Pelinna tablet (*OF* 485.2):

εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Βάκχιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.

Tell Persephone that Bakchios himself has liberated you.

The tablet warns that the goddess will decide the destiny of the deceased but that Dionysos will act as mediator.<sup>53</sup> The same ideas appear in Pindar, in a passage which speaks about the liberation of certain souls by Persephone, after accepting compensation for her ‘ancient grief’ (Dionysos’ death).<sup>54</sup>

Both gods also appear united and related to Orphism in the τελετή of the Gurôb Papyrus and in a passage in Proclus, who quotes a line from the *Rhapsodies*.<sup>55</sup>

51 Βάκχιος is a derivative that properly should mean ‘related to Bakchos’, and it should be proper to the worshipper of the god, whereas Βάκχος ought to be the god’s name. There is thus an identification between the worshipper and the god, so that their appellations become interchangeable. Cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions*, pp. 52f.

52 *Il.* IX.457, 569; *Od.* 10.491, 534, 566 and 11.47; Hes. *Th.* 768.

53 Cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions*, pp. 66–76.

54 Pind. fr. 133.1–2 Maehler (*OF* 443) οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος / δέξεται; cf. commentary on *OF* 443.

55 Procl. in *Plat. Tim.* III 297.3 Diehl.

παῖσαν δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς τὴν εὐδαίμονα περιάγουσα ζῶην ἀπὸ τῆς  
περὶ τὴν γένεσιν πλάνης, ἧς καὶ οἱ παρ' Ὀρφεῖ (*OF* 348) τῶι  
Διονύσῳ καὶ τῇ Κόρῃ τελοῦμενοι τυχεῖν εὖχονται,  
κύκλου τε λήξαι καὶ ἀναψῆσαι κακότητος.<sup>56</sup>

Leading the whole soul to the happy life after the wanderings of  
becoming, which those who are initiated into Dionysos and  
Kore, with the aid of Orpheus, pray to obtain, that is to say  
(*OF* 348):

‘liberation from the cycle and a respite from disgrace’.

In iconography too they are represented together, as on the *pinakes* of Lokroi<sup>57</sup> and on a krater in Toledo on which Dionysos is represented clasping Hades’ hand in the presence of the goddess.<sup>58</sup>

It is noticeable that Dionysos and Persephone, who as gods should in principle be immune to death, take part in some odd stories where they were affected by death. Dionysos is dismembered and is then reborn. Persephone is raped by the god of death and disappears from the Olympian world and from the spheres of life and sunlight.<sup>59</sup> To the latter episode we must add an even stranger event, which is found in relation to the rape, both in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and in the Orphic version of the same theme preserved in the Berlin Papyrus (*OF* 396): Demeter’s failed attempt to compensate for the loss of her divine child by turning a mortal child, Demophon, into a god. It is very probable that the relation of both these gods with death and with the other events of human life combines to turn them into mediators of the destiny of men in the afterlife, including their eventual deification. The Orphic *mystai* are identified with Dionysos in their rebirth after death, so as a result Persephone is their mother, hence their invocation to her in a Thurii gold leaf with the moving expression: ‘mother, hear my supplication’.<sup>60</sup>

56 The text of the Orphic verse is corrected according to Simplic. in *Ar. Cael.* 377.12, cf. also Procl. in *Plat. Tim.* III 296, 7.

57 M. Giangiulio, ‘Le laminette auree nella cultura religiosa della Calabria greca: continuità ed innovazione’, in S. Settis (ed.), *Storia della Calabria antica II: età Italica e Romana* (Rome and Reggio Calabria: Gangemi Editore, 1994), pp. 11–53; R. Olmos, Appendix, in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Instructions*, pp. 284–8.

58 S. I. Johnston and T. J. McNiven, ‘Dionysos and the Underworld in Toledo’, *Museum Helveticum* 53 (1996), pp. 25–36; Olmos, Appendix, pp. 291–3.

59 P. Cabrera Bonet and A. Bernabé, ‘Echos littéraires de l’enlèvement de Perséphone: un vase apulien du Musée Archéologique National de Madrid’, *Antike Kunst* 50 (2007), pp. 58–75.

60 *OF* 492.6–7.

### 3 Helios–Apollo and Artemis–Selene–Hekate

The panorama of relevant Orphic deities is complete with two gods whose role seems related to the structure and cycles of the cosmos, with light and darkness, life and death: Helios, identified with Apollo, and his sister Artemis, identified with Selene and Hekate.

Helios–Apollo is invoked in the *prooimion* of the *Rhapsodies* (*OF* 102). It is the dedication of no other than Orpheus to his cult that causes his punishment by Dionysos, according to Aeschylus in the *Bassarai*.<sup>61</sup> In *OF* 158 he is a vigilant god who rules over everything. After Dionysos' death, Helios–Apollo buries him in Delphi (*OF* 321–2). Helios–Apollo is also identified with Dionysos and Zeus in an Orphic *Hymn to the Sun* of uncertain date:<sup>62</sup>

ἀγλαὲ Ζεῦ Διόνυσε, πάτερ πόντου, πάτερ αἴης,  
Ἥλιε παγγενέτορ πανταίολε χρυσεοφεγγές.

Bright Zeus Dionysos, father of sea, father of land,  
Sun, source of all life, all-gleaming with thy golden light.

On the other hand, we read in the same hymn:<sup>63</sup>

... Ἔρω ...  
ὃν δὴ νῦν καλέουσι Φάνητά τε καὶ Διόνυσον  
Εὐβουλῆά τ' ἄνακτα καὶ Ἀνταύγην ἀρίδηλον.

... Eros ...  
whom men now call by the name of Phanes and Dionysos,  
and the lord Eubouleus and Antauges seen afar.

And after this:<sup>64</sup>

ἀλλαχθεὶς δ' ὄνομ', ἔσχε προσωρυμίας πρὸς ἐκάστων  
παντοδαπὰς, κατὰ καιρὸν ἀμειβομένοιο χρόνοιο.

But with change he took another, having titles  
manifold to fit each change according to the seasons of changing  
time.

61 Aesch. p. 138ff. Radt; cf. M. L. West, 'Tragica VI (12. Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia*)', *BICS* 30 (1983), pp. 63–82; M. Di Marco, 'Dioniso ed Orfeo nelle *Bassaridi* di Eschilo', in A. Masaracchia (ed.), *Orfeo e l'orfismo* (Rome: GEI, 1993), pp. 101–53.

62 *OF* 539.3–4, tr. P. V. Davies.

63 *OF* 540.2–4, tr. P. V. Davies.

64 *OF* 540.8–9, tr. P. V. Davies.

And in other verses of the same hymn the most syncretistic declaration of all is uttered:<sup>65</sup>

εἷς Ζεύς, εἷς Ἅϊδης, εἷς ἥλιος, εἷς Διόνυσος,  
εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι.

One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysos,  
one god in all.

Artemis' role is less relevant. I have already pointed out that she is identified with Plouton, Euphrosyne and Bendis in *OF* 258, and with Selene and Tyche in *OF* 356. At the same time she tries to avoid Kore's rape (*OF* 389).<sup>66</sup> One has the impression that the Orphic poets try to present an Artemis–Moon related to darkness (and therefore identified with Hekate) and close to Kore, as the female counterpart of her brother, Apollo–Sun, related to the world of light and close to Dionysos. Both gods have roles related to the structure and cycles of the cosmos: light and darkness, life and death.

## CONCLUSION

At the end of this brief overview of gods in later Orphism, we can see that most Orphic gods are the same as those of Olympian religion, apart from some important characters of the cosmogonies and some oriental deities, whose cults became integrated into the Greek cultic system. Yet we can see in Orphic doctrines a tendency to identify the gods with each other through various mechanisms: among them one may list the possibility that a god may be born more than once, or that he or she reappears in another god who repeats or incorporates his or her features. It is suggested, and sometimes stated, that the different gods are names, functions and features of a more unitary entity, a sort of alternative identity. This tendency to unity does not crystallize in a monotheistic formulation apart from the Jewish poem attributed to Orpheus, which we call the *Testament of Orpheus*, though this crystallization is probably due more to Jewish influence than to Orphism.<sup>67</sup> But the Orphic tendency to unity may lead to an image of Zeus as supreme god who oscillates between creator god and cosmic demiurge, on the one hand, and a deity identified with the universe, on the other hand. The latter conception seems, at least in its extreme formulations, more

65 *OF* 543, tr. P. V. Davies.

66 Cf. Cabrera and Bernabé, 'Echos littéraires'.

67 *OF* 377–8; see Riedweg, *Jüdisch-hellenische Imitation*.



a Stoic addition to the development of Orphic doctrines than a purely Orphic idea. The allegorical and naturalist interpretations which are considerably developed in Hellenistic times also leave their trace in Orphic religious speculation.

The subversion of the generational order recounted in the theogonies (which include the swallowing of an ancestor god and the incest with Rhea–Demeter and with Persephone, the daughter born from their mating) allows Zeus to be his own successor in power and finally to bring stability to the divine world. At the same time it explains the transference of features from one god to another, and, last but not least, it is probably a divine pendant to the possibility of reincarnation among human beings.

Yet the most un-Olympic of the features of Orphic gods is the idea that human beings are of divine origin and can be reintegrated into their primitive condition. This reintegration is reached through rites like the *τελετή*; through a specific knowledge of the origin and evolution of mankind; and through following a specific type of life. This peculiar aspect is patronized by two peculiar gods, Dionysos and Persephone, who, in spite of being immortals, suffer some events which can be interpreted as death and resurrection in tales in which human beings participate in one way or another. Both gods act as mediators who grant the initiates salvation and divinization. The initiates hope to be identified with Dionysos after death, in the last stage of a long series of reincarnations, and be welcomed by the god's mother, Persephone, whom they now consider their own mother. On the other hand, Apollo–Helios and Artemis–Selene seem to be more related to the physical structure of the cosmos.

## CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS AND GREEK GODS

*Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta*

Greek gods and polytheism as a distinctive feature of Graeco-Roman culture and religion were favourite themes among the Christian apologists of the second century. In an attempt to promote monotheism as characteristic of Christian religion, the apologists not only presented pagan religion as a typically polytheistic belief, but also established the ‘disarmingly simple model . . . according to which mankind . . . had progressed from polytheism to monotheism under the catalytic action of Christianity’.<sup>1</sup> This idea was pushed so far that the evolutionary model was altered and polytheism presented as a temporary involution: as a corruption of the original monotheism, polytheism had its roots in the transgression committed by Adam and Eve. Since then human beings had surrendered to externalities and sensualism, as a result of which polytheism and its concomitant idolatry established itself as the way, *par excellence*, to channel human religious experience.<sup>2</sup>

Strange though it may seem, these conceptions are not confined to antiquity and the Middle Ages, however. On the one hand, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), at the end of the eighteenth century, and the philosopher Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854), in the middle of the nineteenth, are both representatives of the evolutionary model.<sup>3</sup> On

1 P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede (eds), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 7.

2 For a precedent for the idea about an original form of monotheism in Paul’s letter to the Romans, see G. H. van Kooten, ‘Pagan and Jewish monotheism according to Varro, Plutarch and St. Paul: the aniconic, monotheistic beginnings of Rome’s pagan cult – Romans 1:19–25 in a Roman context’, in A. Hilhorst et al. (eds), *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 633–51 at 637 = Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 346–7.

3 See F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, tr. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper and Row, 1963 [Edinburgh, 1928]), p. 34, *apud* N. MacDonald, ‘The origins of monotheism’, in L. T. Stuckenbruck and W. W.

the other, the Cambridge Platonist Henry More (1614–87), at the end of the seventeenth century, established the scheme according to which monotheism was not only the climax of the spiritual and theological evolution, but also the original, pure and spiritual religion.<sup>4</sup>

However interesting, monotheism is not the main focus of my chapter. The theme has recently been thoroughly dealt with in the volume *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* edited by Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede.<sup>5</sup> The articles included in that study sufficiently dismantle the artificial cliché by dealing with the issue from several perspectives. Notwithstanding this, the polarity polytheism–monotheism and Christianity's attempts to present itself as the only licit form of monotheism do represent the background against which the apologists' attack on the Graeco-Roman gods must be projected.

Instead I shall focus on the ways and the arguments used by Christian apologists to reject polytheism and pagan deities as well as to vindicate the superiority of their creed. In order to do so I shall restrict my field of investigation to the second century. This choice is not arbitrary, however. It is in this period that Christianity first achieves and delineates its own identity, due to both external and internal pressures. Moreover, the apologists of the second century provide enough material to allow the analysis of the gradual development of motifs used against pagan deities.

I intend to offer an overview of the apologists' opinions which, obviating questions of detail, may allow us to observe both the authors' view of the Greek gods and the place they occupy in the group as a whole. All apologetic treatises of this period include a variety of attacks on pagan deities. Interestingly, in their criticism of Greek gods, apologists are not wholly independent of one another. It is possible both to trace the origin of the main motifs and to see them developing over the years. There are some differences, however. As we move through the second century we can appreciate a gradual increase

S. North (eds), *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), pp. 204–15 at 213: 'As such subordinate stages, we set down, generally speaking, Idol-worship proper (also called Fetishism) and Polytheism; of which again, the first stands lower than the second. The idol worshipper may quite well have only one idol, but this does not give such Monolatry any resemblance to Monotheism, for it ascribes to the idol an influence over a limited field of objects of processes, beyond which its own interest and sympathy do not extend'; F. Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974 [1842]).

4 H. More, *The Grand Mystery of Godliness* (London: J. Flesher and W. Morden, 1660).

5 Athanassiadi and Frede, *Pagan Monotheism*, pp. 1–2.

in arguments. Old themes remain, but beside them there appear new issues intended to give the apologists' censure of Greek religion a somewhat more solid appearance.

With a view to analysing this development of motifs, my exposition is thematically organized. The first section deals with the rejection of idolatry, the second evaluates the more ethical approach regarding the behaviour of Graeco-Roman gods, and the third part focuses on the criticism of the philosophical approaches to divinity. I will end with some conclusions based on the previous analysis.

## 1 THE JEWISH BACKGROUND: IDOLATRY

When approaching the first apologetic or proto-apologetic treatise, to wit the *Kerygma Petri* (*KP*), we realize that we are still exclusively moving within the conceptual world of Judaism. The *Preaching of Peter*, a text dated to the beginnings of the second century and probably composed in Egypt,<sup>6</sup> is transmitted fragmentarily, mainly but not exclusively in different works by Clement of Alexandria, who quotes extensively from it,<sup>7</sup> but is also briefly quoted and referred to by Origen and John of Damascus.<sup>8</sup>

In line with Judaeo-Christian monotheism, one of the main objectives of the preserved sections of *KP* is to stress that 'there is one God who created the beginning of all things and who has power over their end'.<sup>9</sup> Immediately afterwards, *KP* adds a statement that might be seen as a rudiment of negative theology: according to fragment 2a,

6 Some scholars have attempted to offer a more precise date. So, for example, D. W. Palmer, 'Atheism, apologetic and negative theology in the Greek apologists of the second century', *VigChris* 37 (1983), pp. 234–59 at 238, proposes the year AD 110; H. Paulsen, 'Das Kerygma Petri und die urchristliche Apologetik', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 88 (1977), pp. 1–37, dates it between AD 100 and 120; E. von Dobschütz, *Das Kerygma Petri kritisch untersucht* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1893), more carefully dates it roughly between 80 and 140.

7 Most fragments derive from several passages from *Stromata*, but frag. 1c is preserved in *Eclogae propheticæ* 58, on which see W. Rordorf, 'Christus als Logos und Nomos: Das Kerygma Petri in seinem Verhältnis zu Justin', in A. M. Ritter (ed.), *Kerygma und Logos: Beiträge zu den geistlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Carl Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 424–34, and Paulsen, 'Das Kerygma', pp. 24–5. See, for the reconstruction of the Greek text, von Dobschütz, *Das Kerygma*, pp. 18–27.

8 Origen, *On John* XIII, 104; *De princip.* I, prol. 8; John of Damascus, *Sacra parallela*, A 12 (PG 95, col. 1158); Gregory of Nazianzus, *epp.* 16 and 20 (PG 37, cols 49–50 and 53–6).

9 *KP* 2a (*apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 6.5.39.2): γινώσκετε οὖν ὅτι εἷς θεός ἐστιν, ὃς ἀρχὴν πάντων ἐποίησεν, καὶ τέλους ἐξουσίαν ἔχων, tr. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 22.

God is 'the Invisible (ἀόρατος) who sees all things; the uncontainable (ἀχώρητος), who contains all things; the One who needs nothing (ἀνεπιδεής), of whom all things stand in need'.<sup>10</sup>

Admittedly, at first sight, these ideas might be connected with middle Platonism.<sup>11</sup> A closer look, however, reveals that the matter is not as simple as it may seem. To begin with, differently from middle Platonic texts, the formulation includes not only negative but also positive descriptions. Also important is the fact that some of the terms used here do not appear in a Platonic context but only in Judaeo-Christian sources. As has been pointed out,<sup>12</sup> terms such as ἀόρατος are not applied to God either by Plato or by Alcinous,<sup>13</sup> but they are widely attested in Jewish portions of the *Oracula Sibyllina* (frag. 1, 8), in a pseudo-Orphic poem of Jewish origin quoted by Clement of Alexandria,<sup>14</sup> and by Paul in the Letter to the Colossians (1.15). Also, the term ἀχώρητος is found only in the context of Judaeo-Christianity.<sup>15</sup> Finally, references to God as being beyond any need (ἀνεπιδεής) are attested in middle Platonic contexts,<sup>16</sup> but they also appear in the *Letter of Aristeas* (211), in Josephus (*Ant.* 8.111), and in Philo (*Leg. alleg.* 2.2). It thus seems reasonable to describe this passage, with Daniélou, as a 'common-place of Jewish missionary style' in the context of the criticism of idolatry.<sup>17</sup>

In line with this Jewish background, fragment 2b introduces an attack on pagan idolatry which completely relies on Jewish sources. The motif will be recurrent from now on in most apologetic treatises,

10 KP 2a (*apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 6.5.39.3): ὁ ἀόρατος, ὃς τὰ πάντα ὁρᾷ, ἀχώρητος, ὃς τὰ πάντα χωρεῖ, ἀνεπιδεής, οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐπιδέεται καὶ δι' ὃν ἐστίν, ἀκατάληπτος, ἀέναιος, ἀφθαρτος, ἀποίητος, ὃς τὰ πάντα ἐποίησεν λόγῳ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ, tr. Elliot, *Apocryphal New Testament*, with some changes.

11 See Alcinous, *Didask.* 10.3.

12 A. J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste. IV: Le Dieu inconnu et la gnose* (Paris: Gabalda, 1954), p. 106; see also J. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, and Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 326 n. 12.

13 See, however, the term in plural applied by Alcinous, *Didask.* 15.1 to daemons, but not in the sense we are dealing with. It appears three more times (7.4; 13.1; 17.1), but in all three cases it has the daily sense 'invisible'.

14 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.12.78.4.

15 Hermas, 26.2.1–2: καὶ πάντα χωρῶν, μόνος δὲ ἀχώρητος ὢν. An extended search in the TLG indeed reveals that the term, as applied to God, first appear in Hermas in order to reappear in Irenaeus, Gregorius Nazianzenus and other later Christian Platonists.

16 Other variants for the same concept are ἀνενδεής or ἀπροσδεής: Alcinous, *Didask.* 10.3 (ἀπροσδεής); *Corpus Hermeticum* 6.1 (οὔτε γὰρ ἐνδεής ἐστί τις).

17 See B. Gärtner, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1955), pp. 215–18; Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, p. 325, and Palmer, 'Atheism', n. 34, who relies on Daniélou.

which include only tiny differences due to the character and style of the apologist in question.<sup>18</sup> Referring to pagans, *KP* says that:

ὅτι ἀγνοία φερόμενοι καὶ μὴ ἐπιστάμενοι τὸν θεὸν <ὡς ἡμεῖς κατὰ τὴν γνῶσιν τὴν τελείαν>, ὧν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν εἰς χρῆσιν, μορφώσαντες ξύλα καὶ λίθους, χαλκὸν καὶ σίδηρον, χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον, τῆς ὕλης αὐτῶν καὶ χρήσεως, τὰ δοῦλα τῆς ὑπάρξεως ἀναστήσαντες σέβονται ἃ δέδωκεν αὐτοῖς εἰς βρωσιν ὁ θεός<sup>19</sup>

For actuated by ignorance and not knowing God . . . they have fashioned into figures that over which He has given them the power of disposal for use, (namely) stocks and stones, brass and iron, gold and silver; and <forgetting> their material use, have set up and worship (as gods) that which should have served them as subsistence.

Palmer rightly stresses the Jewish provenance of the motif,<sup>20</sup> but he seems to go too far in his attempts to downplay the influence of Greek philosophers altogether.<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, the clearest precedent for this passage is a famous section of *Wisdom* (13.1–15),<sup>22</sup> a text that heavily relies on Greek philosophy.<sup>23</sup>

18 For the rejection of idolatry in paganism, see below n. 21 and F. Graf, 'Plutarch und die Götterbilder', in R. Hirsch-Luipold (ed.), *Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), pp. 251–66. For a precedent in Romans see above n. 2. See *Epistle to Diognetus* 2.2–3 and 2.7; Aristides 13.3; Justin, I *Apol.* 9.2; Athenagoras, *Suppl.* 26; Tertullian, *Apol.* 12.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* IV 46.30–47, etc. On the issue, see P. C. Finney, 'Idols in second and third century apology', *Studia Patristica* 17/2 (1982), pp. 684–7.

19 *KP* fr. 2b, tr. R. McL. Wilson, in E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, tr. R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Clarke, 1992), pp. 34–41 at 38.

20 For the Jewish background, see Isaiah 44.9–20; Jeremiah 10.1–16; Psalm 15.1–8.

21 Palmer, 'Atheism', p. 255 and n. 37. For the rejection of idolatry in antiquity see Heraclitus B5 D–K; Herodotus 2.172; Plato, *Leg.* 931A; Timaeus *FrGH* 566 F 32; Horace, *Sat.* 1.8; Philo, *Decal.* 76; *Leg. alleg.* 1.6; Epictetus 2.8.20; Lucian, *Jup. Conf.* 8; *Jup. Trag.* 7; *Somm.* 24. In general, see P. Decharme, *La critique des traditions religieuses chez les grecs des origines au temps de Plutarque* (Brussels: Culture et Civilisation, 1966 [1904]).

22 Compare *Wisdom* 13.1: οἷς παρῆν θεοῦ ἀγνωσία; 13.10–13: ἐκάλεσαν θεοὺς ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον . . . ἢ λίθον ἄχρηστον . . . ξύλον σκολιὸν καὶ ὄζοις συμπεφυκός . . . ἀπείκασεν αὐτὸ εἰκόνι ἀνθρώπου.

23 On which see H. I. Marrou, *A Diognete: introduction, édition critique, traduction et commentaire* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1965), p. 108, and, more recently, J. M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), pp. 50–62; C. Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse ou la Sagesse de Salomon* (Paris: Gabalda, 1985), pp. 748–67; M. Kepper, *Hellenistische Bildung im Buch der Weisheit* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), pp. 170–87. A detailed analysis of *Wisdom* 13.1–19 can be found in D. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), pp. 247–68, who provides a large number of parallels.

The same applies to the theme, included immediately afterwards, of the sacrifices offered to pagan divinities:

πετεινὰ τοῦ ἀέρος καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης τὰ νηκτὰ καὶ τῆς γῆς τὰ ἐρπετὰ καὶ τὰ θηρία σὺν κτήνεσι τετραπόδοις τοῦ ἀγροῦ, γαλαῖς τε καὶ μῦς, αἰλούρους τε καὶ κύνας καὶ πιθήκους καὶ τὰ ἴδια βρώματα βρωτοῖς θύματα θύουσιν καὶ νεκρὰ νεκροῖς προσφέροντες ὡς θεοῖς ἀχαριστοῦσι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τούτων ἀρνούμενοι αὐτὸν εἶναι<sup>24</sup>

That also which God has given them for food, the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea, the creeping things of the earth with the four-footed beasts of the field, weasels and mice, cats, dogs and apes; and that which should serve them as food they sacrifice . . . and offering what is dead to the dead as though they were gods, they are unthankful towards God since they thereby deny his existence.

*KP*'s criticism follows Jewish precedents,<sup>25</sup> although it is also true that the new sensibility that rejects the shedding of blood and claims a 'rational sacrifice' is a common topic in the first centuries of the Christian era.<sup>26</sup>

The second representative of this trend of criticism is the *Epistle to Diognetus* (*ED*), a text whose date of composition is still a matter of controversy today. The table included in Marrou's edition gives a good idea of the wide range of dates postulated for this peculiar piece of writing, from the first to the sixteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Most scholars, however, agree that the text should be placed somewhere in the second century. Given its clear contacts both with *KP* and with Aristides (below), and taking into consideration the exclusively Jewish character and contents of its attack on paganism, we prefer a date in the early second century, and more precisely a date between *KP* and Aristides.<sup>28</sup>

24 *KP* 2b, tr. R. McL. Wilson, in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, pp. 34–41 at 38.

25 Isaiah 1.11–13; Hosea 6.6.

26 In a Jewish context, see *Test. Levi* 3.6: λογικὴ καὶ ἀναίματος θυσία; Romans 12.1, λογικὴ λατρεία, on which see Van Kooten, 'Pagan and Jewish monotheism', pp. 648–9 = Van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context*, pp. 356, 388–91; 1 Peter 2.5: πνευματικαὶ θυσίαι; see *Corpus Hermeticum* 1.31: λογικαὶ θυσίαι ἀγναί; 13.21; Porphyry 2.45.19: νοεῶν θυσία. See also E. Pagels and K. King, *Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity* (New York: Viking Press, 2007), ch. 3, 'Sacrifice and the life of the spirit'.

27 Together with Marrou, *A Diognete*, see also J. J. Thierry, *The Epistle to Diognetus* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

28 See, however, R. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), pp. 178–9, who dates the text after AD 176, although on rather questionable grounds. More convincing are the arguments issued by

For the first time, we now find not only a reference to but also a development of the Jewish literary topos on idolatry. Taking its starting point from clear Old Testament models, *ED* goes on to deride pagan deities. Thus *ED* 2.2 compares stone idols to pavements we tread on;<sup>29</sup> bronze and ceramic images are ridiculed due to their being of even lesser value than utensils;<sup>30</sup> and iron and wooden ones because they cannot protect themselves from rust and corrosion.<sup>31</sup>

Criticism, however, is not only levelled on the grounds of the idols' corruptible materials. *ED* 2.3 goes on to affirm that man-made objects which could easily be transformed into different objects or else be destroyed altogether should not be considered gods.<sup>32</sup> Later apologists will approach this argument from the perspective of negative theology in order to deny that ephemeral objects may be considered gods at all.<sup>33</sup> *ED*, however, still sticks to the *via analogiae* and, even though occasionally including negative descriptions of God, it follows Wisdom in claiming that God's existence should be deduced from his creation.<sup>34</sup>

## 2 THE MYTHICAL BACKGROUND: THE IMMORALITY OF PAGAN GODS

As we move on in the second century, a new weapon in the apologists' attack on pagan religion is the focus on mythology with a view

(footnote 28 *continued*)

Marrou, *A Diognete*, pp. 259–65, who dates it to c. 190–200, although admitting the close resemblances between *ED* and the old apologetic style, as represented by *KP* and Aristides, and explaining them as due to the author's will to compose the first apologetic part of his treatise (chs 2 to 4) in the manner of these old precedents (at 260).

29 Deuteronomy 4.28; Isaiah 44.9–20; Jeremiah 10.3–5.

30 See *Ep. Jer.* (Baruch 6) 17; Wisdom 13.11–12.

31 *Ep. Jer.* (Baruch 6) 11, 19.

32 Jeremiah 10.3–5; Habakkuk 2.18–19; *Ep. Jer.* (Baruch 6) 7–29 and 44–58.

33 See Aristides 13.1–2; Justin, I *Apol.* 9.2; Tatian, *Oratio* 4; Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autol.* I 10; Athenagoras 15.1–2; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 24.1; Tertullian, *Apol.* 12.7; cf. 40.9 and Marrou, *A Diognete*, p. 106 n. 4.

34 Wisdom 13.5, 'For from the greatness and beauty of created things, is their author correspondingly perceived.' The method had a long history and extensive use, however. See, in general, Plato, *Rep.* 442E ff; *Philebus* 55A; 64D ff; *Leg.* 903B; *Gorgias* 497D; *Phd.* 78B ff etc.; Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 8.7.17; Pseudo-Aristotle, *De mundo* 399B 15; Philo, *Somm.* 1.204, *Decal.* 60, *Abr.* 71 ff. As applied to theology and the perception of divinity, Diogenes of Apollonia B 3 DK; Plato, *Philebus* 28E, *Leg.* 886A; Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.2–19; Aristotle, fr. 12a Ross; Epicurus, *Peri phys.* 26.30.2–3, on which Sextus Emp., *Math.* 9.45; Pseudo-Aristotle, *De mundo* 399B–400A; Seneca, *De beneficiis* 4.6; Epictetus 1.6. See also, in the context of middle Platonism, Philo, *Leg. alleg.* 3.97–103, *Praem.* 41–2, *Spec.* 1.33 ff, 3.187–9.



to disproving the anthropomorphism of Greek deities.<sup>35</sup> Criticism of anthropomorphism, however, required a better definition of the divine, and the apologists resort to Greek philosophy in the search for their conceptual artillery.

In addition to Plato, it was Aristotle, Epicurus and middle Platonism that provided the most suitable models. Indeed, when properly selected, these philosophical texts offered outstanding material both for establishing a solid basis for Christian monotheistic pretensions and for constructing an apologetic discourse following Greek precedents that could find acceptance among pagan addressees. It is in this context that we first encounter the negative approach to the definition of God. Whereas the *via analogiae* reigns in the first apologetic treatises based on Jewish models, which already appeared in Wisdom (13.5), in line with the conceptual developments of the period, authors from the middle of the second century onwards embrace the *via negativa*,<sup>36</sup> which in a last analysis proceeds from the definitions provided in the 'first hypothesis' of Plato's *Parmenides*.<sup>37</sup>

The first author known to make use of this approach is Aristides. The *Apology of Aristides* is preserved completely only in Syriac, although we also possess a couple of Armenian fragments, a Greek version of the text identified by J. A. Robinson in the eight-century Greek novel *Barlaam and Josaphat* (27), and a couple of Greek fragments.<sup>38</sup> According to Eusebius, Aristides delivered his apology to the emperor Hadrian on the occasion of the emperor's visit to Athens (124–5), but the Syriac version reports that it was dedicated to Antoninus Pius (138–61),<sup>39</sup> allowing in this way a later date, probably to c. 140.

35 For the anthropomorphism of the Greek gods see Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1.

36 On the use of the *via negativa* in the definition of God by the apologists, see Palmer, 'Atheism', *passim*.

37 See E. R. Dodds, 'The Parmenides of Plato and the origin of Neoplatonic "One"', *CQ* 22 (1928), pp. 129–42 at 140, who suggests that this interpretation might originate in Speusippus, who according to Aetius (*ap. Stobaeus* 1.1.29 [58H]) separated the One from the νοῦς and according to Aristotle (*Metaph.* 1092a 11–15) conceived the One as ὑπερϑεόν or at least as ἀνοῦσιον; see Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, pp. 79–91.

38 J. R. Harris and J. A. Robinson, *The Apology of Aristides on Behalf of the Christians: With an Appendix Containing the Main Portion of the Original Greek Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893); with Armenian fragments in English translations on pp. 27–34; for the Greek fragments see also *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 15.1778; *Papyrus London* (Literary) 223, on which see H. J. M. Milne, 'A new fragment of the apology of Aristides', *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1923–4), pp. 773–7. Quotations mostly follow the Syriac text (English tr. with notes pp. 35–64; Syriac text pp. 119–47), since the Greek version has been shown to be epitomizing; see Harris and Robinson, *The Apology*, pp. 70–4.

39 Eusebius, *HE* 4.3.2, states that both Quadratus' and Aristides' *Apologies* were delivered in this context. The Armenian fragments do support Eusebius'

At the outset of the work, both the Syriac and the Greek versions include a definition of God that relies on Aristotle's Unmoved Mover: 'the world and all that is therein are moved by the power of another; and . . . he who moves them is God . . . And it is manifest that that which causes motion is more powerful than that which is moved.'<sup>40</sup> Aristides then proceeds to define God negatively, namely by abstracting all the attributes which could be predicated to him: 'Now I say that God is not begotten, not made; a constant nature, without beginning and without end; immortal, complete and incomprehensible.'<sup>41</sup> Interestingly enough, however, Aristides does not simply endorse the known negative attributes current in middle Platonism, but also paraphrases them in a way similar to Gnostic texts such as *Sophia Jesu Christi* and the *Apocryphon Johannis*:<sup>42</sup>

Now when I say that he is 'perfect', this means that there is not in him any defect, and he is not in need of anything but all things are in need of him. And when I say that he is 'without beginning', this means that everything which has beginning has also an end, and that which has an end may be brought to an end. He has no name, for everything which has a name is kindred to things created.<sup>43</sup>

On the basis of this definition of God, Aristides proceeds to criticize the religion of the Egyptians, Greeks and Jews. Interested as he is in

(footnote 39 *continued*)

affirmation, but the Greek text in the novel *Barlaam and Josaphat* lacks any dedication whatsoever and the Syriac version is dedicated to the emperor Caesar Titus Hadrianus Antoninus. According to R. M. Grant, 'The chronology of the Greek apologists', *VigChris* 9 (1955), pp. 25–33 at 25, Eusebius might have confused this emperor with Hadrian. However, Grant's suggestion that it was composed after 143 when Fronto was *consul suffectus*, as a reaction to a supposed writing against Christians by the famous rhetorician, is not convincing. On the lack of evidence for such a writing see my 'The early Christians and human sacrifice', in J. N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), pp. 81–102.

40 Syriac: Aristides 1.8–14 (Harris, p. 35); Greek: 1.4–7 (Robinson, p. 100): ἰδὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα, ὅτι κατὰ ἀνάγκην κινεῖται, συνῆκα τὸν κινουῖντα καὶ διακρατοῦντα εἶναι θεόν. πᾶν γὰρ τὸ κινεῖν ἰσχυρότερον τοῦ κινουμένου καὶ τὸ διακρατοῦν ἰσχυρότερον τοῦ διακρατουμένου ἐστίν.

41 Syriac: Aristides 1.22–23 (Harris, p. 35); Greek: 1.8–11 (Robinson, p. 100): αὐτὸν οὖν λέγω εἶναι θεὸν τὸν συστησάμενον τὰ πάντα καὶ διακρατοῦντα, ἀναρχον καὶ αἰδίου, ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀπροσδεῖ, ἀνώτερον πάντων τῶν παθῶν καὶ ἐλαττωμάτων, ὁργῆς τε καὶ λήθης καὶ ἀγνοίας καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν.

42 W. C. van Unnik, 'Die Gotteslehre bei Aristides und in den gnostischen Schriften', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 17 (1961), pp. 166–74.

43 I follow the Syriac version, of which I include the English translation by Harris. Greek parallels to the Syriac are included in the notes. Syriac: Aristides 1.24–30. The Greek omits the section.

demonstrating the high standards of Christian morality (below), his main point is to show that the gods' immorality is a bad example for the citizens. Aristides' criticism first focuses on the imperfection of Greek gods, both moral and physical, in order to continue afterwards with a long list of aspects that do not fit his definition of the divine. It is in chapter 8 of the Syriac version that we find the first attack on pagan deities, and its introductory lines already advance the predictable themes of the following chapters:

Some of their gods were found to be adulterers and murderers, and jealous and envious, and angry and passionate, and murderers of fathers, thieves and plunderers; and they say that some of them were lame and maimed; some of them wizards, and some of them utterly mad, etc.<sup>44</sup>

After the short introduction, the rest of chapter 8 and chapter 9 focus on immorality and include mythological examples thereof, such as the story of Kronos and Rhea and how Zeus castrated his father (9.20–34). Aristides then goes on to criticize Zeus' protean nature, not, as one would expect, because change is alien to the definition of God, but because Zeus' metamorphosis is a means to seduce innumerable females and produce a large number of children (9.35–16). Aristides' conclusion is clear:

Because of these stories, O king, much evil has befallen the race of men . . . since they imitate their gods, and commit adultery, and are defiled with their mothers and sisters, and in sleeping with males: and some even have dared to kill their fathers. For if he, who is said to be the head and king of their gods, has done these things, how much more shall his worshippers imitate him!<sup>45</sup>

From chapter 10 onwards, Aristides concentrates on the physical and moral defects of particular gods: Hephaistos is lame and has to keep himself (10.29–34); Hermes is a greedy thief (10.35ff); Asklepios also has to work and dies struck by lightning; Ares is jealous and greedy;

44 Syriac: Aristides 8.22–26 (Harris, p. 40); Greek: 8.5–8 (Robinson, p. 104): οὓς ἐκείνοι αὐτοὶ ἐξέθεντο μοιχοὺς εἶναι καὶ φονεῖς, ὀργίλους καὶ ζηλωτὰς καὶ θυμαντικούς, πατροκτόνους, καὶ ἀδελφοκτόνους, κλέπτας καὶ ἄρπαγας χωλοὺς καὶ κυλλοὺς καὶ φαρμακοὺς καὶ μαινομένους.

45 Syriac: Aristides 9.17–28 (Harris, p. 41); Greek: 8.16–20 (Robinson, p. 104): εἰ γὰρ οἱ θεοὶ αὐτῶν τοιαῦτα ἐποίησαν, πῶς καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐ τοιαῦτα πράξουσιν; ἐκ τούτων οὖν τῶν ἐπιτηδεύματων τῆς πλάνης συνέβη τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πολέμους ἔχειν συχνοὺς καὶ σφαγὰς καὶ αἰχμαλωσίας πικράς. Ch. 9 omits any reference.

Dionysos is a drunkard, and so forth. Chapter 10 further enumerates the defects of other godly figures. The most striking example is his critique of Artemis on the grounds that 'it is disgraceful that a maid should go about by herself on mountains and follow the chase of beasts. And therefore it is not possible that Artemis should be a goddess' (10.9–12).

After a brief excursus on the topic of idolatry in chapter 13 that focuses on the known description of idols as 'dead and senseless images', unable to ensure their own preservation and manufactured of low materials, Aristides arrives at chapter 15, in which he presents the Christian God and morality as exactly the opposite of what has been shown in the preceding chapters.

A similar combination of motifs can be found in the first *Apology* of Justin, written c.150.<sup>46</sup> On the one hand, criticism of idolatry focuses on the known commonplaces of manufacture and materials, while sacrifices are rejected on the grounds that they imply that the gods are in need, and this is impossible.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, Justin attacks Greek gods for their alleged immorality. In spite of the similarities with previous apologetic treatises, he represents a new approach to the matter. Most of his references to Greek deities are included in an obvious *ad hominem* argument, in so far as he does not defend Christians from the criticism levelled against their beliefs, but just provides parallels from Greek mythology in an attempt to exonerate the alleged inconsistencies of Christian religion.

The *tu quoque* fallacy is clear in chapter 21 of his *Apology* and intends to validate the Christian creed that Jesus, the Son of God and produced without sexual union, 'was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven',<sup>48</sup> by referring to a number of mythical

46 For this date see M. Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994) 11, who builds on Harnack's dating to 'ein paar Jahre nach 150' (A. Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* II.1 [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1954 (Leipzig, 1897)], p. 278).

47 Justin, *I Apol.* 9, *passim*, 20.14 and 58.11–12, *Dial.* 35.6. See his rejection that God is in need in *I Apol.* 10.2–4, 'Ἄλλ' οὐ δέεσθαι τῆς παρὰ ἀνθρώπων ὕλικῆς προσφορᾶς προσειλήφαμεν τὸν θεόν, αὐτὸν παρέχοντα πάντα ὁρῶντες· ἐκείνους δὲ προσδέχεσθαι αὐτὸν μόνον δεδιδάγμεθα καὶ πεπείσμεθα καὶ πιστεύομεν, τοὺς τὰ προσόντα αὐτῷ ἀγαθὰ μιμούμενους, σωφροσύνην καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ φιланθρωπίαν καὶ ὅσα οἰκεῖα θεῷ ἐστὶ, τῷ μηδενὶ ὀνόματι θεῷ καλουμένῳ. Greek text according to Marcovich, *Iustini*.

48 Justin, *Apologia Maior* 21.1–4, Τῷ δὲ καὶ τὸν λόγον, ὃ ἐστὶ πρῶτον γέννημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἄνευ ἐπιμιξίας φάσκειν ἡμᾶς γεγενῆσθαι, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν διδάσκαλον ἡμῶν, καὶ τοῦτον σταυρωθέντα καὶ ἀποθανόντα καὶ ἀναστάντα ἀνεληλυθέναι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. English translations according to A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (eds), *Ante-Nicene Christian Library. 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1867).

examples.<sup>49</sup> If divine figures, whether or not originally divine, such as Asklepios, Dionysos, Herakles, the Dioskouroi, Perseus, Bellerophon and Ariadne, were also transported to heaven after death, he seems to argue, there is no need to ridicule Christian beliefs.<sup>50</sup>

Having done this, he proceeds, in the second part of the same chapter, to deny all moral authority to Greek gods.<sup>51</sup> He wonders how it is possible to believe in a god like Zeus,

ὥς καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν ἡγεμόνα καὶ γεννήτορα πάντων κατ' αὐτοὺς Δία πατροφόντην τε καὶ πατρὸς τοιούτου γεγονέναι, ἔρωτί τε κακῶν καὶ αἰσχροῶν ἡδονῶν ἥττω γενόμενον ἐπὶ Γανυμήδην καὶ τὰς πολλὰς μοιχευθείσας γυναῖκας ἐλθεῖν, καὶ τοὺς αὐτοῦ παῖδας τὰ ὅμοια πράξαντας παραδέξασθαι.<sup>52</sup>

the governor and creator of all things, [who] was both a parricide and the son of a parricide, and that being overcome by the love of base and shameful pleasures, he came in to Ganymede and those many women whom he had violated and that his sons did like actions.

His answer to this question appears in his theory that Greek mythology was in fact a forgery of Moses' prophecies committed by demons in order to prevent people from coming to know the truth.<sup>53</sup> Incidentally, we now realize that in choosing some mythical persons (such as Dionysos, Bellerophon, Perseus, Herakles and Asklepios) and not

49 Exactly the same approach can be found in his second *Apology*. Ch. 12 intends to exonerate Christians from the false accusations levelled against them, by attributing them to the instigation of evil demons. According to Justin, the accusations were false; but even if they were not, pagan religion includes enough examples of such crimes (Justin, *Apologia Minor* 12.17–26): 'For why did we not even publicly profess that these were the things which we esteemed good, and prove that these are the divine philosophy, saying that the mysteries of Saturn are performed when we slay a man, and that when we drink our fill of blood, as it is said we do, we are doing what you do before that idol you honour, and on which you sprinkle the blood not only of irrational animals, but also of men, making a libation of the blood of the slain by the hand of the most illustrious and noble man among you? And imitating Jupiter and the other gods in sodomy and shameless intercourse with woman, might we not bring as our apology the writings of Epicurus and the poets?'

50 Ibid. 21.1–17.

51 Ibid. 21.18–31.

52 Ibid. 21.22–37.

53 On the origin and function of demons in Justin, see L.W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 106–10. In general, see now the articles collected by S. Parvis and P. Foster (eds), *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

others, Justin was actually following a hidden agenda, since these figures now play an important role in his theory of the falsified Moses.

In fact, he affirms that by twisting what Genesis 49.10–11 says about Jesus,<sup>54</sup> the demons said that it was Dionysos who was begotten by Zeus, discovered wine and then ascended to heaven. In addition, not understanding the precise meaning of the prophecy, they also said that it was Bellerophon who on his horse Pegasus reached the heavens. According to Justin, when the demons heard from Isaiah 7.14 that Christ was to be born from a virgin (παρθενος) and ascend to heaven, they said it was Perseus who did so. The prophecy about Jesus in Psalm 18(19).6 was applied to Herakles<sup>55</sup> and Isaiah's prophecies about Jesus' miracles (Is. 35.5–6) were attributed to Asklepios.<sup>56</sup> As a result, Christians refuse to worship pagan deities because, as Justin affirms, through Jesus Christ, '(we) learned to despise these, though we be threatened with death for it, and have dedicated ourselves to the unbegotten and impassible God'.<sup>57</sup>

Let us now proceed to Tatian's *Oratio ad Graecos*. This apologetic writing used to be dated to soon after 150, but has recently been redated, on the basis of internal evidence, to between 165 and 172.<sup>58</sup> In it, Tatian adopts a rather aggressive tone which, to a certain extent, is new in the genre. The accumulation of names of Greek philosophers in chapters 2 and 3 of his *Address to the Greeks* might, at first sight, give the impression that Tatian is better informed about the philosophical theories on the divine than he actually is.<sup>59</sup> In fact, a closer look immediately reveals not only the topical nature of his criticism,<sup>60</sup> but also his debt to Justin, his only innovation being the aggressive tone and the consequent transformation of the *tu quoque* fallacies of his master into arguments *ad personam*. The only philosophical view he actually deals with in more detail, the Stoic conflagration, appears

54 Genesis 49.10–11, 'A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of nations. Binding his foal to the vine, and the foal of his ass to the branch of it, he shall wash his robe in wine, and his garment in the blood of the grape.'

55 Psalm 18(19).6, 'His going forth is from the extremity of heaven, and his circuit to the other end of heaven: and no one shall be hidden from his heat.'

56 See the references to Isaiah 7.14, Psalm 18(19).6 and Isaiah 35.5–6 in Justin, *1 Apol.* 54.8; 54.9 and 54.10, respectively.

57 Justin, *1 Apol.* 25.1–13, at 6–7.

58 See M. Marcovich, *Tatiani Oratio ad Grecos* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), pp. 1–3, who mentions Tatian's reference to the death of his master Justin (c. 165) as a *terminus post quem*.

59 See Tatian *Or.* 2–3, for the superficial references to Diogenes, Aristippus, Plato, Aristotle, Heraclitus, Zeno, Socrates, Empedocles, Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Crates.

60 See, for example, Diogenes Laertius 6.23.76, for his reference to Diogenes; 2.78, for Aristippus; Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Plato* 3.8, for his reference to Plato.

to be a reworking of his master Justin. While Justin could, with reservations, still compare the Last Judgement to the Stoic theory of *ekpyrosis*,<sup>61</sup> Tatian now postulates the resurrection both of soul and body at the Last Judgement in order to stress the differences.<sup>62</sup> In point of fact, as Miroslav Marcovich has convincingly argued against the opinion of Harnack, Tatian's treatise borrows extensively from Justin and develops his themes and motifs.<sup>63</sup>

As was to be expected, Tatian's attack on Greek gods also relies on Justin. He uses similar examples and criticizes the same issues. On the one hand, he associates Greek gods with demons, although the argument is to some extent radicalized: Greek gods are no more an invention of demons but are demons themselves (below). On the other hand, he criticizes their immorality,<sup>64</sup> but then, instead of rejecting them on moral grounds, he proceeds to denounce their 'contradictions': 'how are those beings to be worshipped among whom there exists such a great contrariety of opinions?'<sup>65</sup>

Tatian's attack on mythology and astrology occupies chapters 8 to 10 of his *Address to the Greeks*. He begins his criticism of the Greek gods (= demons) by censuring their being subject to passions, their doubtful morality, and the bad example they give:

καὶ μήτι γε οἱ δαίμονες αὐτοὶ μετὰ τοῦ ἡγουμένου αὐτῶν Διὸς ὑπὸ τὴν εἰμαρμένην πεπτῶκασι, τοῖς αὐτοῖς πάθεσιν οἷσπερ καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι κρατηθέντες. οἱ γὰρ τοὺς μονομαχοῦντας βλέποντες καὶ θάτερος θατέρῳ σπουδάζων <θεός>, καὶ ὁ γαμῶν καὶ παιδοφθορῶν καὶ μοιχεύων, γελῶν τε καὶ ὀργιζόμενος, φεύγων τε καὶ τιτρωσκόμενος πῶς οὐχὶ θνητὸς εἶναι νομισθήσεται; Δι' ὧν <περ> γὰρ ἑαυτούς, ὁποῖοί τινες πεφύκασι, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πεφανερῶκασι, διὰ τούτων τοὺς ἀκούοντας ἐπὶ τὰ ὅμοια προὔτρξαντο.<sup>66</sup>

And are not the demons themselves, with Zeus at their head, subjected to Fate, being overpowered by the same passions as men? But must not those who are spectators of single combats and are partisans on one side or the other, and he who marries

61 Justin, *1 Apol.* 20.

62 Tatian, *Or.* 3.12–15, 6.1–8.

63 Marcovich, *Tatiani*, pp. 1–3; compare Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, p. 286 n. 4.

64 Tatian, *Or.* 8.10–12.

65 Ibid. 8.18–19. Greek text according to Marcovich, *Tatiani*; English translation according to J. E. Ryland, in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (eds), *Ante-Nicene Fathers. 1: Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1867).

66 Tatian, *Or.* 8.10–17; compare Justin, *1 Apol.* 21.22–7 (above).

and is a paederast and an adulterer, who laughs and is angry, who flees and is wounded, be regarded as mortals? For, by whatever actions they manifest to men their characters, by these they prompt their hearers to copy their example.

After a short transition which should (but does not quite) clear up what he means by 'contradictions', he includes several mythical references (among which one easily discerns some of Justin's examples<sup>67</sup>) and some attempts to ridicule the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The most interesting issue of his exposition is perhaps his conception of the Zodiac as invented by demons and the already mentioned association of these demons (planets) with the Greek gods. They not only keep humans ensnared in the chains of fate, but also enjoy themselves playing with human fortune. This theme, hinted at at the beginning of chapter 8, is developed in chapter 9:

ἡ γὰρ τοῦ ζωδιακοῦ κύκλου γραφή θεῶν ἐστὶ ποίημα, καὶ τὸ ἐπικρατῆσαν, ὥς φασιν, ἐνὸς αὐτῶν φῶς τοὺς πλείονας παραβραβεύει, καὶ ὁ νικώμενος νῦν εἰσαῦθις ἐπικρατεῖν εἴωθεν· εὐαρεστοῦσι δὲ αὐτοῖς οἱ ἐπὶ πλανῆται, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς πεσσοῖς ἀθύροντες.<sup>68</sup>

For the delineation of the zodiacal circle is the work of gods. And, when the light of one of them predominates, as they express it, it deprives all the rest of their honour; and he who now is conquered, at another time gains the predominance. And the seven planets are well pleased with them, as if they were amusing themselves with dice.

There are clear Gnostic undertones about this notion, not only in the implicit association of the gods or planets with evil rulers governing the sublunary world and taking pleasure at human *fatum*. More important is perhaps the theological dualism, implicit in the description of the Christian God being above these lower gods, and the anthropological dualism behind Tatian's statement that Christians are above fate and the rule of the planets:

ἡμεῖς δὲ καὶ εἰμαρμένης ἐσμὲν ἀνώτεροι καὶ ἀντὶ πλανητῶν δαιμόνων ἓνα τὸν ἀπλανῆ δεσπότην μεμαθήκαμεν καὶ οὐ καθ' εἰμαρμένην ἀγόμενοι τοὺς ταύτης νομοθέτας παρητήμεθα.<sup>69</sup>

67 Such as his references to Zeus, Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena and Kybele. For the text of Justin, see previous note.

68 Tatian, *Or.* 9.10–17.

69 Ibid. 9.14–17.



But we are superior to Fate, and instead of wandering demons, we have learned to know one Lord who wanders not; and, as we do not follow the guidance of Fate, we reject its lawgivers.

### 3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

Thus far Greek philosophy has only appeared in the background and has been mainly visible in the either rudimentary or more developed negative theology applied by the apologists in their definition of God. However, not only do authors such as Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch assume the rational criticism of religion by Greek philosophers as their predecessors did, but we also find them attacking the philosophical theories regarding the divine.

Athenagoras, 'philosopher and Christian', as the title of the *Plea for the Christians* describes him, indeed adopts quite a different approach from that of his forerunners. The text is dated to 177 and in it, to side with Marcovich, Athenagoras 'employs the full range of his philosophical . . . erudition and Christian education to convince' the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Probably due to the fact that Marcus Aurelius himself was a philosopher, and thanks to Athenagoras' own philosophical qualification as a teacher of philosophy, the *Legatio pro Christianis* occupies a singular place among the extant apologetic treatises due to the higher quality of style and content.

With regard to the theme we are dealing with, his criticism includes the now familiar motifs of idolatry and anthropomorphism, but his is not a simple repetition of *loci communes*. Athenagoras adds new arguments to substantiate his disapproval, adorning them with numerous quotations from Greek poets and philosophers, of which the *apparatus fontium* in Marcovich's edition provides due testimony.<sup>70</sup> It is noteworthy that Athenagoras, who was probably acquainted with Celsus' reply to Christian attacks on idolatry,<sup>71</sup> no longer equates statues with gods, as was the norm for the early apologists. In point of

70 On the philosophical background, see J. Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907); A. J. Malherbe, 'The structure of Athenagoras' *Supplicatio pro Christianis*', *VigChris* 23 (1969), pp. 1–20, and 'Athenagoras on the poets and philosophers', in P. Granfield and J. A. Jungmann (eds), *Kyriakon: Festschrift J. Quasten* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), pp. 214–25; L. W. Barnard, *Athenagoras: A Study in Second Century Christian Apologetic* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), and 'The philosophical and theological background of Athenagoras', in J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser (eds), *Epektasis: Mélanges Jean Daniélou* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), pp. 3–16. See also, more recently, M. Marcovich, *Athenagoras Legatio pro Christianis* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), p. 3 n. 8, 3–14 and the *apparatus fontium*.

71 *Apud* Origenes, *Cels.* 7.62.

fact, the transition from his critique of sacrifice and idols<sup>72</sup> to that of myths<sup>73</sup> is precisely based on this point:

Ἐπεὶ τοίνυν φασὶ τινες εἰκόνας μὲν εἶναι ταύτας, θεοὺς δὲ ἐφ' οἷς αἱ εἰκόνες, καὶ τὰς προσόδους, ἃς ταύταις προσίασιν, καὶ τὰς θυσίας ἐπ' ἐκείνους ἀναφέρεισθαι καὶ εἰς ἐκείνους γίνεσθαι, μὴ εἶναί τε ἕτερον τρόπον τοῖς θεοῖς ἢ τοῦτον προσελθεῖν.<sup>74</sup>

It is affirmed by some that, although these are only images, yet there exist gods in honour of whom they are made; and that the supplications and sacrifices presented to the images are to be referred to the gods, and are in fact made to the gods; and that there is not any other way of coming to them.

Athenagoras' criticism, in 20.1–38, of the gods' anthropomorphic features and immorality also includes new elements. Admittedly, he opens the section with the known references to the various emascuations and cannibalistic episodes of Zeus' saga, together with the mention of his incest committed with Rhea. But he complements these stories with new issues, such as elements proceeding from the Orphic cosmogony attributed to Hieronymus and Hellanicus.<sup>75</sup>

Most interesting for us is his attack on the allegorical interpretations of the gods as natural forces. Far from the *ad hominem* arguments we are used to from previous apologists, his attack on philosophical views of the gods is no longer based on simple denigrations, but on the discussion of theories. Athenagoras disproves Empedocles' allegorizations on the grounds that if the gods are one of the elements, they must depend on something previous to them, namely Love and Strife, which combines and separates them. After quoting the Presocratic philosopher (B 6.2–3 D–K), he points out:

εἰ τοίνυν Ζεὺς μὲν τὸ πῦρ, Ἥρα δὲ ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ ἀήρ Ἀἰδωνεύς καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ Νῆστις, στοιχεῖα δὲ ταῦτα, τὸ πῦρ, τὸ ὕδωρ, ὁ ἀήρ, οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν θεός, οὔτε Ζεὺς, οὔτε Ἥρα, οὔτε Ἀἰδωνεύς· ἀπὸ γὰρ τῆς ὕλης διακριθείσης ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ τούτων σύστασις τε καὶ γένεσις . . . ἃ

<sup>72</sup> Athenagoras, *Legatio* 13.7–22 and 14.1–17.36, respectively.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 18.7–21.67.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 18.1–4. Against this view, see *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 11.4.1 and *Recognitions* 5.23–26.

<sup>75</sup> See *OF* 2, 3, and 1 Bernabé, in A. Bernabé (ed.), *Poetae epici graeci: testimonia et fragmenta*, Pars II, fasc. 1–2: *Orphicorum et orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 2004–5). A commentary on this cosmogony and Athenagoras' *Legatio* testimony in A. Bernabé, *Textos órficos y filosofía presocrática: materiales para una comparación* (Madrid: Trotta, 2004), pp. 35–41.

χωρὶς τῆς φιλίας οὐ δύναται μένειν ὑπὸ τοῦ νείκους συγχρόμενα, πῶς ἂν οὖν εἴποι τις ταῦτα εἶναι θεοῦς;<sup>76</sup>

If, then, Zeus is fire, and Hera the earth, and Aidoneus the air, and Nestis water, and these are elements . . . none of them is a god . . . for from matter separated into parts by God is their constitution and origin . . . Here are things which without harmony cannot abide; which would be brought to ruin by strife: how then can any one say that they are gods?

In his view, by putting matter and its principle on the same level, we seem to be equating corruptible matter with the unbegotten, eternal and ever self-accordant God. In this conclusion we can already see that Athenagoras bases his criticism on a strict definition of the divine, achieved by applying the negative approach of middle Platonism. In fact, all subsequent sections close with a similar assertion.<sup>77</sup>

The apologist then moves on to criticize other allegorizations, such as the Stoic equation of Zeus with the 'fervid part of nature', Hera with air and Poseidon with water. After briefly referring to Philodemus' conception of Zeus as air of double nature (male-female) and the view that Kronos is 'the turn of season' regulating and balancing weather,<sup>78</sup> Athenagoras focuses on what for him are the apparent contradictions of Stoic views. If they admit that there is a one and supreme deity; that things are formed by the transformation of matter and that God's spirit pervading matter takes a different name according to the latter's different states; it seems clear that the different states of matter are the bodies of the gods. Following a known criticism of the theory of conflagration,<sup>79</sup> Athenagoras concludes:

φθειρομένων δὲ τῶν στοιχείων κατὰ τὴν ἐκπύρωσιν ἀνάγκη συμφθαρῆναι ὁμοῦ τοῖς εἶδεσι τὰ ὀνόματα, μόνου μένοντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ. ὧν οὖν σωμάτων φθαρτὴ ἢ κατὰ τὴν ὕλην παραλλαγή, τίς ἂν ταῦτα πιστεύσαι θεοῦς;<sup>80</sup>

76 Athenagoras, *Legatio* 22.6–10. The coincidence between these equivalences and the list included in Diogenes Laertius 8.76 shows indeed that Athenagoras has based his opinions on doxographical material.

77 Cf. Athenagoras, *Legatio* 22.30–4; 45–9; 52–3.

78 Philodemus, *De Pietate* 8.8 and Varro *apud* Augustine, *Civitas Dei* 4.10, respectively.

79 See Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Mixtione* p. 226.10–20 Bruns; Plutarch, *De def. orac.* 426B; Origen, *C. Cels.* 1.21.

80 Athenagoras, *Legatio* 22.29–32.

but when the elements are destroyed in the conflagration, the names will necessarily perish along with the forms, the Spirit of God alone remaining. Who, then, can believe that those bodies, of which the variation according to matter is allied to corruption, are gods?

There follows criticism of a large number of allegorizations: Kronos as Time, Rhea as the Earth, Kronos' fury as the seasons' succession, Kronos' sojourn in the Tartarus as the obscure, cold and humid seasons. In Athenagoras' view, 'none of these is abiding; but the Deity is immortal, and immoveable, and unalterable: so that neither is Kronos nor his image God'.<sup>81</sup> After adding a couple more examples,<sup>82</sup> he concludes:

καίτοι γε πάντα μᾶλλον ἢ θεολογοῦσιν οἱ τοὺς μύθους <\*>. θεοποιοῦντες, οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι οἷς ἀπολογοῦνται ὑπὲρ τῶν θεῶν, τοὺς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς λόγους βεβαιοῦσιν.<sup>83</sup>

And yet, in fact, they who refer the fables to actual gods, do anything rather than add to their divine character; for they do not perceive, that by the very defence they make for the gods, they confirm the things which are alleged concerning them.

Thus far Athenagoras. Let us now proceed to Theophilus of Antioch. The exact date of Theophilus of Antioch's *Ad Autolyicum* is difficult to establish. The work consists of three books not only written at different times but also different in style.<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately this variety does not apply to the content and the work abounds in tedious repetitions.<sup>85</sup> While the date of the first two books is not wholly certain, according to Robert Grant the third one was composed after the death of Marcus Aurelius.<sup>86</sup>

81 Ibid. 22.43–4.

82 Ibid. 22.48–61.

83 Ibid. 22.62–4.

84 According to M. Marcovich, *Theophili Antiocheni Ad Autolyicum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), p. 3, the interval between the composition of books I and II is 'a few days' (*Ad Autolyc.* 2.1.1), but that between these and the third book might be longer, given that Autolyicus is referred to differently in the previous books (3.1.1).

85 See R. M. Grant, *Theophilus of Antioch: Ad Autolyicum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. x, and Marcovich's commentary (*Theophili*, 3): 'The assumption that the author was dealing with much the same topics on three occasions may explain the fact that the work as a whole is ill-organized, highly repetitious and even redundant.'

86 Cf. *Ad Autolyc.* 3.27. See Grant, 'The chronology', p. 30.

In Theophilus we find again the aggressive and contemptuous tone of Tatian. While chapter 2 of the third book is very reminiscent of Tatian's personal attacks at the beginning of his *Address*, the transition to the third book is clear about his attitude towards Greek culture:

ταῦτα δέ φαμεν εἰς τὸ ἐπιδείξει τὴν ἀνωφελῆ καὶ ἄθεον διάνοιαν αὐτῶν. Δόξης γὰρ κενῆς καὶ ματαίου πάντες οὗτοι ἐρασθέντες οὔτε αὐτοὶ τὸ ἀληθὲς ἔγνωσαν οὔτε μὴν ἄλλους ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν προετρέψαντο.<sup>87</sup>

We say these things to demonstrate their (the Greeks') useless and godless notions. All these, as lovers of empty and useless fame, neither knew the truths themselves nor impelled others towards the truth.

His criticism of Greek gods is topical and superficial. He names numerous philosophers and poets, but he seldom goes into detail, giving in this way the impression of relying on collections of philosophical opinions rather than on direct knowledge of the passages in question.<sup>88</sup>

All three books of *Ad Autolycum* include criticisms of the Greek gods. Theophilus' attack on idolatry and sacrifices revisits the simple old arguments of the first apologists. Once again, we find the equation of idols with gods, as was the norm before Athenagoras. At the outset of book 1, he follows the Psalmist in affirming that pagan deities 'neither see, nor hear, since they are idols and the work of men's hands', and this is a recurrent theme in his work.<sup>89</sup>

This return to the old models is also visible in Theophilus' criticism of anthropomorphism, which mainly includes long lists of examples of immorality,<sup>90</sup> many of them already known from earlier apologists: Kronos eating his children, Zeus' incest, adulteries and pederasty, Dionysos' drunkenness, castrated Attis, Asklepios struck by lightning, etc., etc. Theophilus' ignoring of the issue of passions shows once again his lack of concern with philosophical or ethical issues, which had become normal from Aristides onwards.<sup>91</sup>

As far as the criticism of the philosophical views of the divine is concerned, Theophilus restricts himself to dealing superficially with the

87 Theophilus, *Ad Autolyc.* 3.2.21–32.

88 See Grant, *Greek Apologists*, pp. 148–9.

89 Theophilus, *Ad Autolyc.* 1.1, 1.10, 2.2–2.3, 2.34, 2.36.

90 Ibid. 1.9–10, 3.3.11–23.

91 See above, pp. 449–51.

theological opinions of the Stoics and Platonists. His only objective is in fact to stress contradictions within the same school in order to reject all of them on the grounds of inconsistency. With regard to the former, he focuses exclusively on their views of God, the creation of the universe and God's relationship to it. Theophilus complains about the fact that some Stoics deny God's existence while others accept it; he then opposes the theory of the world's spontaneous generation to the view that the universe is uncreated and eternal. Finally he balances the rejection of divine providence against the view according to which God's spirit pervades matter.<sup>92</sup>

As far as the Platonists are concerned, after approvingly quoting Plato's view of God in the *Timaeus* (28C 2–3) as 'uncreated, the father and the Maker of the universe', Theophilus criticizes the Platonists' assumption that uncreated matter is also God and was coeval with him,<sup>93</sup> because if this was so, God could not be the Maker of the universe.<sup>94</sup> In Theophilus' words:

εἰ δὲ θεὸς ἀγέννητος καὶ ὕλη ἀγέννητος, οὐκ ἔτι ὁ θεὸς ποιητὴς τῶν ὅλων ἐστὶν κατὰ τοὺς Πλατωνικοὺς, οὐδὲ μὴν μοναρχία θεοῦ δείκνυται, ὅσον τὸ κατ' αὐτοῦς. ἔτι δὲ καὶ ὥσπερ ὁ θεός, ἀγέννητος ὢν, καὶ ἀναλλοίωτός ἐστιν, οὕτως, εἰ καὶ ἡ ὕλη ἀγέννητος ᾗ, καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος καὶ ἰσόθεος ᾗ.<sup>95</sup>

But if God is uncreated and matter is uncreated, then according to the Platonists God is not the Maker of the universe, and as far as they are concerned the unique sovereignty of God is not demonstrated. Furthermore, as God is immutable because he is uncreated, if matter is uncreated it must also be immutable, and equal to God.

In any case, this is all Theophilus adduces against philosophical theology, and he proceeds immediately to focus on poetical views of God and to underline the contradictions between philosophers and poets. First he censures Homer for saying that the Ocean was the origin of the gods, and this as everyone knows is just water,<sup>96</sup> and Hesiod for assuming the pre-existence of matter, but omitting how it was made:<sup>97</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Theophilus, *Ad Autolyc.* 2.4.1–7.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. H. Diels. *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1879), p. 567, 13; 588, 17–18.

<sup>94</sup> Theophilus, *Ad Autolyc.* 2.4.8–10.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 2.4.11–14.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 2.5.1–10.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. 2.6.1–24.

εἰ γὰρ ἐν πρώτοις ἦν χάος, καὶ ὕλη τις προϋπέκειτο ἀγέννητος οὐσα, τίς ἄρα ἦν ὁ ταύτην μετασκευάζων καὶ μεταρρυθμίζων καὶ μεταμορφῶν;<sup>98</sup>

He says this but he does not explain by whom they were made. If originally there was chaos, and a certain uncreated matter already subsisted, who was it who reshaped it, remodelled, and transformed it?

One more example will suffice to show Theophilus' literal way of interpreting the poets. After quoting Hesiod's hymn to the Muses,<sup>99</sup> he derides him for asking the Muses to relate how everything originated:

πῶς δὲ ταῦτα ἠπίσταντο αἱ Μοῦσαι, μεταγενέστεραι οὐσαι τοῦ κόσμου; ἢ πῶς ἠδύναντο διηγήσασθαι τῷ Ἑσιόδῳ, ὅπου δὴ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῶν οὐπω γεγένηται;<sup>100</sup>

How did the Muses know these things when they originated later than the world? How could they describe them to Hesiod when their father had not yet been born?

## CONCLUSIONS

It is now time to draw to a close and offer some conclusions. At first sight the analysis of all the representative examples of apologetic attacks on pagan deities places before us a clear thematic pattern which develops in three stages. Our testimonies can be included in an evolutionary scheme, in so far as they do not substitute one motif for another, but simply add the new motif to the older ones proceeding from tradition.

Whereas in a first stage the contents and objectives of the apologists are rather simple and straightforward, as time goes by, arguments and motifs against pagan deities seem to increase gradually.

In a second stage, and thanks to the input of Greek philosophical tradition, apologists were able to surmount the sterile ground of a criticism exclusively based on idolatry and sacrifices. The appropriation of pagan definitions of God that we see in Aristides, Justin and Tatian not only provided the apologists with a more consistent conceptual framework and a wider basis for their attack on pagan deities. It also allowed them to adopt the critical approaches to pagan religion

98 Ibid. 2.6.18–20.

99 Hes. *Th.* 104–10 and 112–15.

100 Theophilus, *Ad Autolyc.* 2.5.33–5.

of the Greeks themselves and to take advantage of the numerous inter-school polemical disputes.

This appropriation was not without consequences, however. Once the apologists had adopted the philosophical approach to divinity, they were trapped in the conceptual world of their adversaries. This is clear, in my view, in the third stage of this evolutionary scheme, as represented by Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch. Whereas a figure of the stature of Athenagoras could face the challenge and creatively turn Greek philosophical arguments against the Greek, an author without philosophical training such as Theophilus was caught in his own net. His frustration might, to a certain extent, explain his return to old Jewish motifs and, especially, the contemptuous character of his criticism.

It goes without saying that this sketched evolutionary framework within which I have analysed the apologists' view on the Graeco-Roman gods should be taken *cum grano salis*. Even though representing one of the evolutionary stages in this ideal scheme, any given author may already hint at or include elements of the following evolutionary stage. Moreover, our ignorance concerning the date of some texts and their mutual relationships might easily falsify our conclusions, for similarities among texts within a given thematic group might simply be the result of mutual dependence.<sup>101</sup> As Aristotle warns us in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 'general statements have an easier application, but the particular cases have a higher degree of truth'.<sup>102</sup>

At any rate, what this evolutionary sketch does allow us to appreciate is the conceptual development of the authors, their interaction with their cultural environment and, more importantly, their appropriation of Graeco-Roman philosophy and terminology as a vehicle for their thoughts and beliefs in an effort to meet the cultural standards of their adversaries.

101 This is, for example, the case with Justin and Tatian and probably also with *KP* and *EP*. The case of Theophilus further shows that we cannot take an evolution in a chronological sense for granted. Although he does follow the model provided by Athenagoras, his lack of philosophical training prevents him from dealing properly with the philosophical theories he intends to criticize.

102 Aristotle, *EN* 1107a28 ff, Δεῖ δὲ τοῦτο μὴ μόνον καθόλου λέγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς καθ' ἕκαστα ἐφαρμόττειν. ἐν γὰρ τοῖς περὶ τὰς πράξεις λόγοις οἱ μὲν καθόλου κοινότεροί εἰσιν, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ μέρους ἀληθινότεροι.



# THE MATERIALITY OF GOD'S IMAGE: THE OLYMPIAN ZEUS AND ANCIENT CHRISTOLOGY

*Christoph Auffarth*

## THE LIVING GOD AND HIS OR HER IMAGE

In the ancient world people imagined a god or a goddess by referring to a double 'image' of the divine being: one is the invisible and immaterial god in opposition to the visible and material world of humankind; the other represents it as a material image, in shape and size almost that of a human being. As I will argue in this chapter, most people were aware of the difference between these two images. Christians, however, accused their pagan adversaries of confusing the two – by taking the material representation as the invisible living god, they worshipped a dead stone, a tree or a beast. Yet the Christians themselves blurred the border between the divine and humankind, since they identified the invisible god with the material and visible man Jesus. They developed this notion by looking back to an older discourse on adequate images of divine beings:

1. a discourse on Pheidias' masterpiece of the Olympian *Zeus* as the ideal representation of the invisible god;
2. a parallel discourse which argues that the relation between the invisible god and the material man called his son can be understood in the same framework as the relations between god and his image. In this respect the man Jesus Christ is the material visible image of God.

When Christianity became a public religion, its cultic communication began to focus on increasingly monumental representations composed of the elements of 'temple', altar and cult image. Around AD

I have to thank Jan Bremmer for inviting me to the conference, Andrew Erskine for a kind reception and for correcting my English paper, brushed up by Dr Tilman Hannemann (Bremen), and the Leventis Foundation for providing a comfortable setting for a wonderful conference.

400, there is a remarkable shift in the representation of the Christian cult image from a beardless child of peace to a majestic bearded man known as the Pantocrator. My argument is that not only in theory but also in reality the Olympian *Zeus* was the model according to which the Pantocrator type also turned out to be the most satisfactory way of representing the Christian God.

In the main part of my argument, I will demonstrate that the Christian polemic about pagans, that they confuse the image with the original and identify the *signum* with the *significatum*, turns out to be true of the Christians themselves. While they insisted on the identity of the material image of God – that is, the man Jesus Christ – with the immaterial and invisible God himself, the classical handling of the images knew about the difference, despite intellectual caricatures of dim-witted men kissing, washing or getting very close to the statue in order to whisper a wish.<sup>1</sup>

Before addressing the Christian discourse, it will be necessary to examine the interrelation between the two images of the living god in ancient religion, the one material, the other invisible and immaterial, and so to understand how and under what circumstances the material image is regarded as a representation of god. I will also be concerned to outline some theoretical observations that underpin my approach.

### CLASSICAL DISCOURSE ON THE MATERIALITY OF GOD'S IMAGE: THE CULT STATUE OF ZEUS AT OLYMPIA AS A 'LIVING' MASTERPIECE

In antiquity there was a long-lasting debate about the qualities of cult statues.<sup>2</sup> I will briefly summarize three different typological opinions. Plato's criticism of the artists will serve as a guide (*Rep.* 10.595a–608b). According to Plato, when artists attempt to represent the world of ideas in inanimate material, they make a major mistake in confusing materiality with ideas. There is, however, one exception: the master-artist might be able to express the living idea through stone or wood or metal. In producing his 'masterpiece', the master-artist

1 E.g. Sen., *Ep. morales* 41.1.

2 H. Funke, 'Götterbild', *RAC* 11 (1981), pp. 659–828; T. S. Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild: Untersuchungen zur Funktion griechischer Kultbilder in Religion und Politik* (Munich: Beck, 2000). The first part of this contribution summarizes an argument I have presented elsewhere at length: C. Auffarth, 'Das angemessene Bild Gottes: Der Olympische Zeus, antike Bildkonvention und die Christologie', in N. Kreutz and B. Schweizer (eds), *Tekmeria: Archäologische Zeugnisse in ihrer kulturhistorischen und politischen Dimension. Beiträge für Werner Gauer* (Münster: Scriptorium, 2006), pp. 1–23.

achieves a creative competence like that of the god himself, since he succeeds in introducing life into the material.

In the following example, the Platonic principles were applied to the seated statue of Zeus in the temple of Olympia, the masterpiece of Pheidias.

(1) Callimachus, *Iambus* 6 (F 196, alluded to at Strabo 8.3.30) offers merely the physical dimensions, the cost and the weight, refraining from words of praise that referred to the vitality of the statue.<sup>3</sup>

(2) Strabo too himself expresses a critical distance in terms of size, but this time it is combined with the idea of life in the statue: he notes disapprovingly the smallness of the temple as the accommodation of the god. If Zeus were to get up from his throne, he would destroy the roof of the house: 'Pheidias, Charmides' son from Athens, has made the cult image of such a great size that though the temple itself is extremely large, it seems that the artist failed to find the apt proportions.<sup>4</sup> So although he shaped his Zeus as a sitting majesty, nevertheless his head is nearly touching the ceiling. If he were to stand up, he would take the roof off the temple.'<sup>5</sup> Hidden in this criticism is the idea that the statue has life within it: since it could do so, it would eventually stand up. And furthermore, the statue only seems to be motionless. Strabo recalls the famous verses from the *Iliad* (1.528–30): Zeus shook Mount Olympos just by moving his eyebrows. Nearly invisible, by the slightest movement in his face, Zeus could cause an earthquake. This, then, could be applied to the statue at Olympia: it only seems that it does not move, yet every visitor is moved by the impressions of the living statue. An active movement of the god cannot be observed, but the passive movement (πάθος) inside the observers is enough evidence of an action originating from god. As a conclusion, Strabo (8.3.30) quotes an ambiguous bon mot: 'Either he [sc. the artist] is the only one who has seen the images of the Gods or the only one who has shown these images.' The verb δείκνυμι, 'to show (one's fiction)', is an alternative to the possibility that 'he had the vision' (θεάομαι) which nobody else could have had. But the artist's task is also to define the

3 Callim.: *Ia*. 6, F 196 (Pfeiffer); see also A. Kerkhecker, 'Kallimachos, Wieland und der Zeus des Phidias', in J. P. Schwindt (ed.), *Zwischen Tradition und Innovation: Poetische Verfahren im Spannungsfeld Klassischer und Neuerer Literatur und Literaturwissenschaft* (Munich: Saur, 2000), pp. 135–62; A. Kerkhecker, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 147–81.

4 On *symmetria*, *harmonia*, *euschêmosynê*, see J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 256–8, 151–4, 184.

5 Strabo 8.3.30; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12, 72, answers in return, that the Eleans had given too little room to expose the immeasurable. On Dio's Olympian speech, see H.-J. Klauck and B. Bäbler (eds), *Dion von Prusa: Olympische Rede oder über die erste Erkenntnis Gottes* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000).

modes of showing and seeing a god. Although Strabo's description of the Olympian Zeus demonstrates a rather reserved stance in his closing pun, he nevertheless admires the liveliness of this outstanding image of the god.<sup>6</sup> Nobody else but Pheidias could have shaped so animated a statue.

(3) By far the most admiring description comes from the Olympian speech of Dio Chrysostom of Prusa. It takes the form of an apologia pronounced in the context of an imaginary trial, in which Pheidias is charged with fashioning the image of Zeus in the shape of man. By overstating the *pathos*, it was the artist and his image that overwhelmed the public, not the god himself (53). Pheidias himself answers these charges: leave aside the sun; it is impossible to represent it. Equally it is impossible to give an image of the mind. The artist is able to represent only the human body as a repository of thinking and reason (ἀγγεῖον φρονήσεως καὶ λόγου, 59). The bodily representation serves merely as a mode of *mystagogia* (spiritual guidance) towards the *theama*, a helpful means to attain the vision of the living god.<sup>7</sup> Finally Zeus himself confirms that Pheidias' image meets the adequacy requirement of a god's representation, because in the end he calls it '(the image) that god likes most' (θεοφιλέστατον).<sup>8</sup>

Plato's critique of the so-called artists is answered in the description of a masterpiece of a 'creative' artist. Pheidias is not one of those humble craftsmen (δημιουργός) who try to make an image of god. What he achieves is the impossible: the material cannot represent the ideas, that is to say the immortal gods. None the less he is able to create by material means a representation of the immaterial ideas. Pheidias is as creative as the ideas are creative; his image is living, it breathes god's aura, majesty and importance, it effects *pathos* in the people who come into the temple. Pheidias' image is not bad materiality but effects in people the vividness and creativeness of the god, who is present through his image.

6 For the emotional effect for an image (ἥθος καὶ πάθος), see Pollitt, *Ancient View*, pp. 184–9.

7 Explicitly also in Lucian, *Peregrinus*, 22 and 36. Just as in Eleusis there is even a *dadouchos*, a priest who 'shows' (δευκνύει) the *mysterion*.

8 Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12, 25 and 88.

### A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

In cultural studies a generation ago a change of methodological paradigms was introduced. Instead of the progression, 'artist – artefact – the modern scholar', the following concept evolved.

***The model of aesthetic reception ('Rezeptionsästhetisches Modell', e.g. Wolfgang Kemp)***

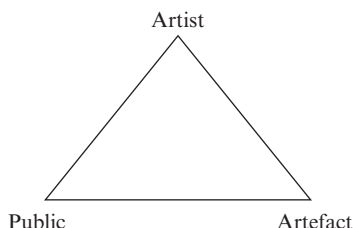


Figure 24.1 Model of aesthetic reception.

The dialogue between the artist and the artefact has to be complemented by a third party: the public (Fig. 24.1). The public is more than a passive 'spectator'; it both takes part in the process of creating the artefact and provides evidence for the contemporary process and the possible modes of reception, in other words how that image was considered at that time.

### The model of the cult image

To meet the aims of comparative religion, however, the approach has to be complemented by the cultic dimension, which resides on the same level as the public looking at the artefact (Fig. 24.2). It is deeper and more intensive, and it refers to specific intentions: the cult image as a representation of the original god. During the cult, the image becomes the representation of god and so takes on the qualities of a cult image. The aesthetic and emotional impact (*pathos*) is not produced by the image but by the original god himself. But only a creative artist can realize this effect. A mere copyist and craftsman (δημιουργός) is able to make nothing else apart from a material copy; his artefact is no more than a fiction (μύμησις), which has the fatal effect that it prevents direct communication with the original. The creative artist, however, produces a living image that comes close to the original god by ὁμοίωσις.

The difference between God and his representation was not invented

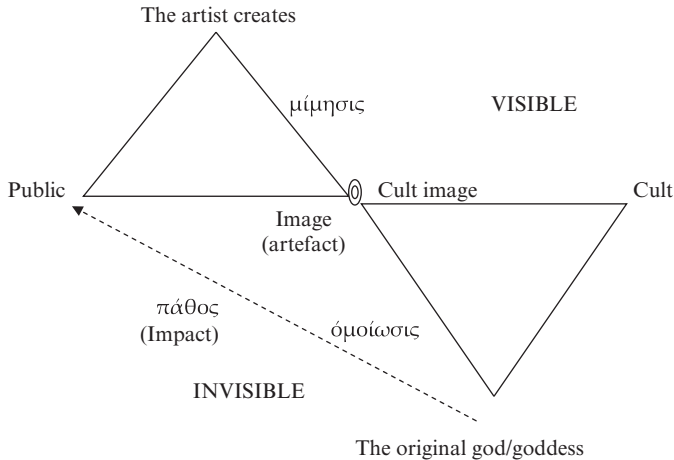


Figure 24.2 Model of the cult image.

with Plato's distinction between idea and visible/material object.<sup>9</sup> Among ordinary Greek men, the difference is well known and, for example, demonstrated in a south Italian vase painting showing the attack by Laokoon's wife Antiope on Apollo (c.430–20 BC; Fig. 24.3). The attack was because Apollo did not intervene when monster snakes bit one of her sons to pieces. On the vase the remains of the son are shown still lying at the feet of the god, while the snakes are curling around the god. But 'the god' is just a statue of Apollo on a two-stepped base. The living god stands behind that scene. Even if the outraged mother were to destroy the statue, the god himself would not be harmed.<sup>10</sup>

The difference between a cult statue and the living god is not just a peculiarity of the south Italian vase painter, as a number of instances show. Another example comes from a sequence in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. Orestes, standing in front of the cult statue and altar of Athena, begs the goddess to come (ἐλθοι 297), but the Erinyes declare: the gods avoid meeting you. However, Athena follows the pleading voice of Orestes from far away and finds him sitting by the wooden statue (βρέτας τοῦ μὸν 409/446). God's epiphany at the presence marker (see below, pp. 475–6) is not self-evident. The goddess does not dwell in the cult statue.

9 Plato, *Leg.* 10.906b, differentiates between ἄψυχοι and ἔμψυχοι. For a view of comparative religion, see H. S. Versnel, 'what did ancient man see, when he saw a god? Some reflections on Greco-Roman epiphany', in D. van der Plas (ed.), *Effigies Dei* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 42–55.

10 For a full description and a further example, see the appendix to this chapter.



Figure 24.3 The attack by Laokoon's wife Antiope on Apollo (Lucanian krater, 430–420 BC).

### THE DEBATE ON THE MATERIALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN GOD IN HIS HUMAN EPIPHANY

- The relationship between the invisible God
- and the material man Jesus Christ
  - has been solved by adapting the discourse and theory of the living cult statue.
- The artist is the creator himself (*acheiropoieton* image).
- His masterpiece is Christ, identical with him.

#### The model of Christology

In the Christological model there is no human artist needed any more. God himself is the artist who creates men and especially his son. The image is not produced manually (*ἄχειροποίητον*)<sup>11</sup> or by the devotion of the public to a masterpiece. The cult community itself creates the cult image during the cult, which becomes the god himself. Christ, who is addressed in the cult, is the material identity of the immaterial and invisible original god. In the Nicene Creed (*Symbolum Nicaenum*)

11 For classical images not made by men, see Funke, 'Götterbild', pp. 727–8. Examples are given in Eur. *IT*, 1384–5; Cicero, *Actio secunda Verr.* 2.5.187; Paus. 1.26.6.

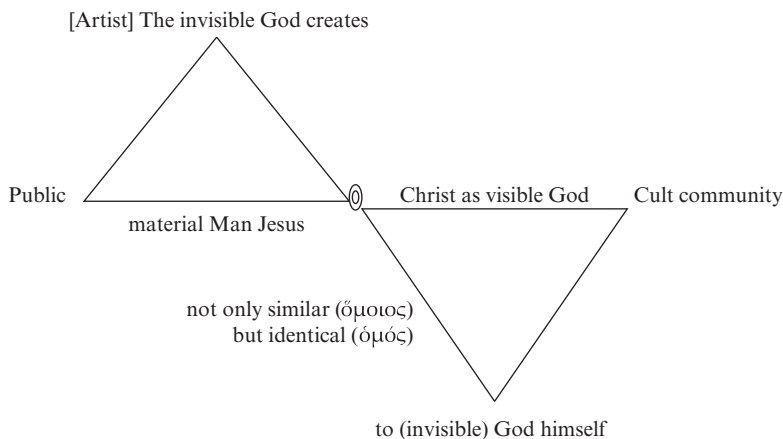


Figure 24.4 Model of Christology.

Christ is identical with, and not only similar (ὅμοιος) to, God. Christ is the permanent identical creation of god in his materiality (Fig. 24.4).

The role given to Mary in the process of creating the Man–God is of special interest. In her case, different terms were applied to the relationship between the living statue and God. She has no divine qualities for herself. Instead, she serves as:

- throne;
- vessel (ἄγγειον τοῦ λόγου);
- temple;
- *theotókos* (who gave birth to a god – not ‘mother’).

Rejecting any possible divine quality of Mary, Ambrose calls her ‘the temple of God, not the God of the temple’:

Incarnatio autem opus spiritus est, sicut scriptum est Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te et virtus altissimi obumbrabit tibi, et quod nascetur ex te sanctum, vocabitur filius dei (Luke 1.35) haud dubie etiam sanctus spiritus adorandus est, quando adoratur ille, qui secundum carnem ‘natus ex spiritu’ est. Ac ne quis hoc derivet ad virginem: Maria erat templum dei, non deus templi, et ideo ille solus adorandus, qui operabatur in templo.

The Incarnation is the work of the Spirit, as it is written, ‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (i.e. Mary), and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and that Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God’. Without doubt the Holy Spirit also is to be adored, since He Who



according to the flesh was born of the Holy Spirit is adored. But let no one divert this to the Virgin Mary; Mary was the temple of God, not the God of the temple. And therefore He alone is to be worshipped Who was working in His temple.<sup>12</sup>

### ZEUS OF OLYMPIA IN THE CHRISTIAN CAPITAL

The image of the Olympian Zeus served as the model of an appropriate image of god not only in theoretical and intellectual discourse, but also in setting aesthetic and religious criteria. The case of Sarapis demonstrates how the model might be used in this way. The Egyptian beast-god in the shape of a bull was an object of abhorrence outside Egypt. In his transformation into Serapis, however, he became a favoured god of the Roman empire. Shaping the new god for the purpose of export, the artists adapted the model of the *Zeus* of Olympia, a full bearded portrait of a man in his best years with long hair. In order to mark him out as different and to make him recognizable he wears on his head the measuring cup for wheat, a *modus* (Fig. 24.5).<sup>13</sup>

When Christianity became a public religion, the need for it to have a monumental presence in the public realm led it to take up the common 'language' of ancient religion (as in the case of Sarapis), but with specific differences.<sup>14</sup> One difference is the very image of God to be used in the cult. This difference, expressed in a two-dimensional representation instead of the three dimensions of the statue, cannot be seen as a reference to the invisible dimension,<sup>15</sup> because the statue of Zeus did not answer prayers either. During the adaptation process, a characteristic change took place:

- In the first stage, up to the years of the reign of Theodosius I (AD 392–5), Christ was represented as a very young man, or

12 Ambrose, *De spiritu sancto* 3, 11, 79–80. Tr. H. de Romestin in P. Schaff and H. Wace (eds), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 10: *Ambrose: Select Works and Letters* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark).

13 Statuette, 24 cm high; time of Antoninus; reproduction of the colossal cult statue of Sarapis in Alexandria, fourth century BC. Rom Ostia Museum, Helbig 3034; *Amelung* vol. 1, p. 360, no. 74. Also the Sarapis statue in the National Museum of Naples Inv. 975. See C. Auffarth, 'Götterbilder im römischen Griechenland: Vom Tempel zum Museum?', in C. Witschel et al. (eds), *The Impact of Empire on the Dynamics of Rituals* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 307–26; P. Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995).

14 On religious language in the Roman empire, see C. Auffarth, 'Kaiserkult und Christuskult', in H. Cancik and K. Hitzl (eds), *Die Praxis der Herrscherverehrung in Rom und seinen Provinzen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2003), pp. 283–317.

15 As M. Barasch, *Das Gottesbild: Studien zur Darstellung des Unsichtbaren* (Munich: Fink, 1998), pp. 25–6, puts it: 'Das ganz Andere'.



Figure 24.5 Statuette of Serapis from Puteoli, now in the National Museum, Naples. Cf. Reinhold Merkelbach, *Isis regina – Zeus Serapis* (Stuttgart, 1995), § 130; 116.

rather a ‘child of peace’, without a beard and with the hairstyle of the emperor, like other princes in the emperor’s court.

- But later, especially under the reign of Theodosius II (AD 408–50), the representation becomes different: an honourable man with long hair and a full beard.

At the time when this change happened, the cult statue of the Olympian Zeus was present in the heart of the Christian capital. The eunuch Lausos, who was the grand chamberlain, collected in his palace many outstanding artworks, the use of which was no longer permitted in cult; now, imported to Constantinople, they served as aesthetic masterpieces of classical art.<sup>16</sup> Prominent among these was the ‘ideal’ image, the living god expressed through a material masterpiece, Pheidias’ Olympian *Zeus*. Contrary to the view of Martin Büchsel, however, this change was not sudden. In his opinion, it was

<sup>16</sup> First reports of Constantine in: Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 1.16; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.5. Kedrenos 1, p 564, 7 ff, CSHB. The evidence is collected in Funke, ‘Götterbild’, pp. 815–17.

a result of the deep crisis that the Roman empire suffered after the fall of Rome in AD 410. After this crucial event, the Almighty God could not be depicted as a member of the emperor's court, which had been decisively defeated. In consequence, Büchsel interprets the change of the image as a sign of a 'crisis cult'.<sup>17</sup> But first, there are still a few instances of a youthful image of God after AD 410. And secondly, the Olympian statue of Zeus had been evaluated as the ideal image of God long before that crisis, as the metamorphosis of the image of Sarapis demonstrates. In adapting it to the taste of the Graeco-Roman (classical) public, the artists chose the ideal image, that of the Olympian *Zeus*. As Paul Zanker has shown in the context of the image of the intellectual in ancient culture, the bearded philosopher is also an allusion to Pheidias' Olympian *Zeus*.<sup>18</sup>

### CULT IMAGES AND THE PERFORMATIVE SOLUTION

Both

- the theory of the living statue
- and the theology of the living man Jesus Christ as an image identical with God

fall into the *fallacy of an ontological* model. Again the ontological perception of images is due to Plato's theory of images. Pheidias' image of Zeus is Zeus himself – essentially not material but a being out of the immaterial world of ideas. The same is true for Jesus Christ: he is not the material man but a being essentially identical with god himself. This ontological model does not meet the realities of cult images: they become cult images through cult and lose this quality again when no cult is performed. Then they are aesthetic masterworks – or humble wooden poles. In response to this I would like to conceptualize a solution that pays attention to the performance of the cult.

- The cult statue is a *presence marker*, where
- God can be present, as long as he is worshipped during the performance of the cult as the 'ordinary cult epiphany'.

17 The controversial dispute opposes the views that either the icon evolved out of Egyptian mummy-portraits (Belting) or a sudden invention happened in the context of a crisis cult (Büchsel); see H. Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich: Beck, 1990); M. Büchsel, *Die Entstehung des Christusporträts: Bildarchäologie statt Bildhypnose* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2003).

18 See Zanker, *Mask of Socrates*.

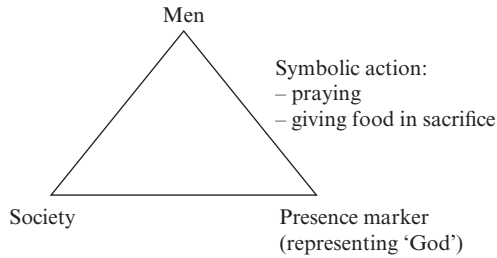


Figure 24.6 Religion as a function to integrate society.

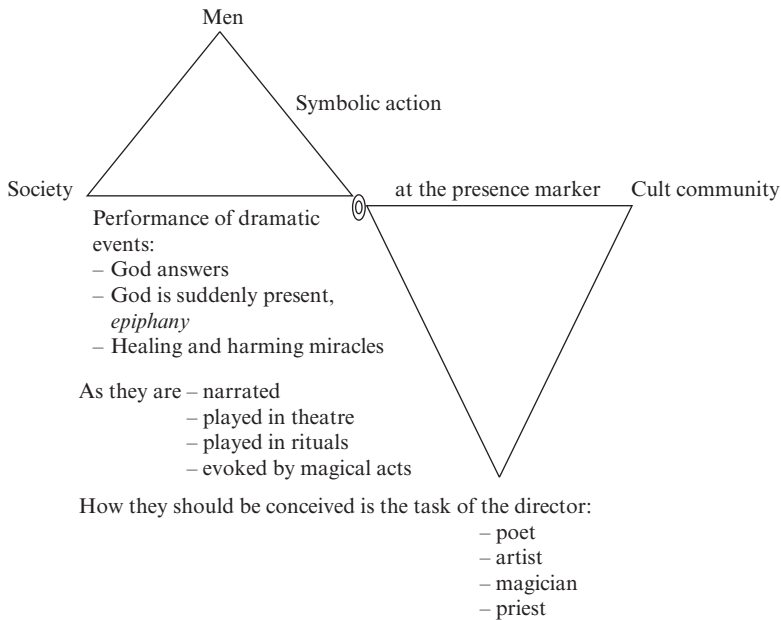


Figure 24.7 Dramatization of the presence marker in 'ordinary cult epiphany'.

### Religious performance and 'the director's point of view'

The symbolic action of rituals works with or without the dimension of the dramatic event, which happened in a mythical past or reoccurs from time to time. The presence marker is a link to a dimension beyond the interaction on the level of the present society. From time to time, especially when a new cult promises to cope better with the same problem, the dramatic event in the past or mythical past must be remembered, when god really acted, answered prayers or reacted to the gifts he accepted so often. Given this performance, the presence marker is also a memorial of earlier and eventually future actions of the god imagined behind the marker.

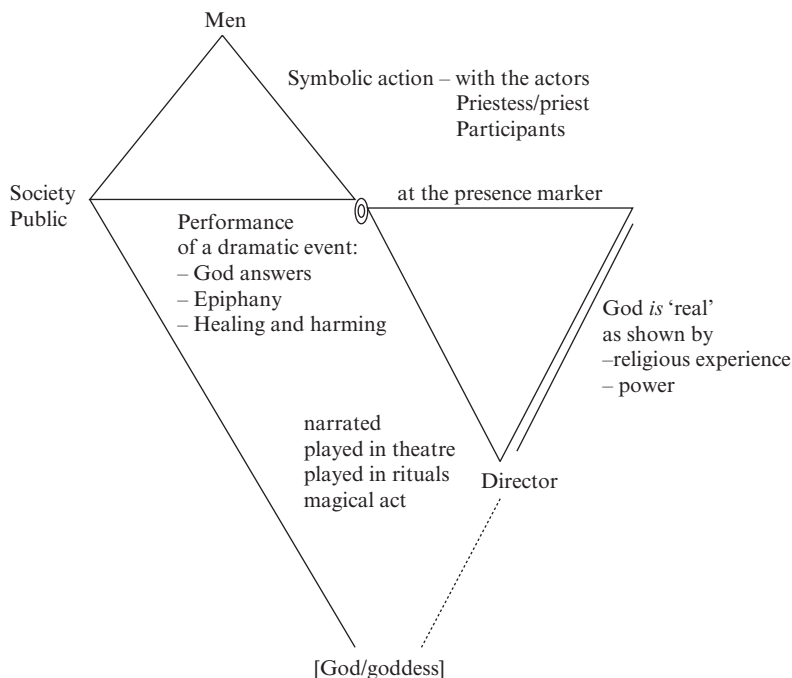


Figure 24.8 What is a Greek god? Modern scholars' and the director's point of view.

The 'director' is often aware of his role as the one who has to perform the dramatic event on the other side of the symbolic action, which is the double meaning of *voμίζεiv* in the ordinary cult: 'to do what is usual' (*vόμος*), though this action has no effect in the sense of a functional and rational action. The actor has to provide the deeper sense of the ordinary cult activity (within the ordinary cult epiphany of the god) as talking with a thing, feeding it, washing it, etc.<sup>19</sup> She or he believes (*voμίζει*) that the attentiveness she or he pays symbolically to the material statue is really paid to the god himself or goddess herself.

In his role, the director stands between identification with and distance from the god. In his performance, he is presenting the dramatic event. Either he identifies himself with god or he is refusing this

19 See in full C. Auffarth, 'Ritual, Performanz, Theater: Die Religion der Athener in Aristophanes' Komödien', in A. Bierl et al. (eds), *Literatur und Religion. 1: Wege zu einer mythisch-rituellen Poetik bei den Griechen* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 387–414; A. Henrichs, 'why should I dance? Choral self-referentiality in Greek tragedy', *Arion*, 3rd ser., 3 (1995), pp. 56–111; A. Henrichs, *Playing God, Performing Ritual: Dramatizations of Religion in Greek Tragedy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, in preparation).

identification. In many instances (as most of the other chapters in this volume demonstrate) the latter is evident, at least in the form of 'reluctance'. In the case of the *Theophania* in Delphi at the time of the Galatian invasions of 279/278 BC, the 'Barbarians' saw the god and his power, when he sprang from his temple together with the two white maidens (Artemis and Athena from the other two temples) to rush into battle against the 'Barbarians'. Though the Greeks did not see the gods in this battle, they believed in the evidence given by the 'Barbarians' and used to celebrate the event in memory of their astonishing victory.<sup>20</sup> As material evidence, they showed the two rocks in the valley that fell down from the mountain and killed some of the 'Barbarians'.

However, there is a third type pointing to the evidence and the 'reality' of the drama, on which the ordinary cult is founded. The vase painting in Figure 24.3 affords an example. It represents a man who raises his arms in an expression of anxiety: What will happen, if Antiope destroys the cult image? The 'director' (here, the vase painter) already knows the answer in depicting the 'real' and 'living' god on the other side of the scene. Apollo will not be harmed. But everybody who is acting in the cult will be as anxious as the man (Laokoon) looking at the woman with the axe and the cult image. The second meaning of *nomízein*, 'to believe', in the reality of the dramatic event on the level beyond the presence marker and its possible relation to a living and real god, is not the task of the director himself. Instead he describes the *pathos*/emotions of the people present at this dramatic event.

My aim in this chapter has been a systematic distinction between different levels of analysis. The *nomízein* is the performance of a ritual as a symbolic action at the presence marker. The modern scholar is not forced into statements like 'ancient people believed that' or 'there must have been a *power* of God'<sup>21</sup> or 'ancient men believed that the cult image *was* the god/goddess'. The director, who tells or plays the story or myth behind the ritual, allows reluctance, even unbelief. *Νομίζειν/Nomízein*, 'to do what is usual', is different from *nomízein*, 'to believe that the myth or ritual action is reality'.

20 See C. Auffarth, "'Gott mit uns!'" Eine gallische Niederlage durch Eingreifen der Götter in der augusteischen Geschichtsschreibung (Pompeius Trogus 24. 6–8)', *Der Altsprachliche Unterricht* 33.5 (1990), pp. 14–38.

21 On the notion of power ('Macht'), see B. Gladigow, 'Macht', in *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998), pp. 68–77; C. Auffarth, 'Protecting strangers: establishing a fundamental value in the religions of the ancient Near East and ancient Greece', *Numen* 39 (1992), pp. 193–216.

## APPENDIX DESCRIPTION OF FIGURE 24.3

Lucanian red-figured bell krater, c.430 BC. Basel *Antikenmuseum*, Collection Ludwig 70. – *LIMC* 6 (1992), p. 198; Laokoon cat. 1 (Erika Simon), *LIMC* 2 (1984), p. 217; Apollo cat. 217 (Wassilis Lambrinudakis); Trendall *LCS Suppl.* 2, 154, 33a; *Suppl.* 3, 6, 33a (Pisticci Painter, mature period); K. Schauenburg, 'Zu Götterstatuen auf unteritalischen Vasen', *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1977), pp. 285–97, 294–7 (figs. 10–11).

On the left hand, the cult image stands on a two-stepped base. The image is in the form of a *kouros*, distinguished by a laurel crown, holding in his hands a laurel tree and his bow. Two bearded snakes are curling around the statue. On the first step, one sees the parts of one or more boy(s) bitten off: the upper part of the body and the head are still linked together, but the eyes are shut as in death. Obviously, the snakes have already devoured the missing parts. Laokoon, a bearded man in his prime, is running towards the god in a mood of desperation and lament, as is shown by his elevated arms. The desperate mourning stands in contrast to the action of his wife Antiope: she is brandishing an axe over her head against the god,<sup>22</sup> the axe by which a sacrificial victim is usually killed at the altar. The whole scene expresses an accusation against the god Apollo that, despite his knowledge of the future, he did not intervene in favour of his servant priest. The painter has designed it, however, in an ambivalent and paradoxical way: the very same Apollo, with the same symbols in his hands, stands behind the men and observes the action of the outraged wife. This god is not standing on a base step; he has been designed as a living god, and the actors do not notice his presence.

There could be an alternative interpretation: that the image is meant to depict another event during the sack of Troy (*Iliupersis*), namely the killing of Troilos and his tearing into parts (*maschalismos*) in the same sanctuary of Apollo, but this does not fit with the details of the scene.<sup>23</sup>

To be compared with Apulian red-figured bell krater, c.380/370 BC. (A fragment) from the Jatta collection in Ruvo. – *LIMC* 2 (1984), 292; Apollo cat. 883 (Wassilis Lambrinudakis) = Laokoon 2, now missing.

In the centre, the statue of Apollo holds a phiale and his bow, two

22 'Directed against the snakes to no avail. Even if she is hitting the cult image, she cannot harm the "living" Apollo' – Laokoon cat. 1 (E. Simon), in *LIMC* 2 (1984), p. 197.

23 For the evidence, see K. Ziegler, 'Thymbraios [etc.]', *RE* 6 A 1 (1936), pp. 694–9.

snakes curling around his body. The lower one bites into a human arm. Lying between the base of the statue and a tripod, there are two further parts of the unfortunate boy, the lower legs and feet. On the right hand, the mother, Laokoon's wife Antiope, seeks to tear away the snakes. On the left hand, behind the cult statue, the living god himself, together with his sister Artemis, watches the scene. He is wearing an identical himation on his back and a laurel tree in his right hand, as does the statue of him.<sup>24</sup>

Both versions of the myth stand in contrast to the Roman versions, where the snakes killed Laokoon and his sons by crushing their bodies (Virgil, *Aen.* 2.201–31, etc.). However, in this Greek version, the snakes devoured one boy piece by piece, whereas father and mother survived and had to watch the killing without any means of help. The story also appeared in the tragedy *Laokoon*, directed by Sophocles (the fragments in *TrGF* 4 F 370–7).<sup>25</sup>

24 Based on the description by Margot Schmidt (text to catalogue no. 70; figures), in E. Berger and R. Lullies (eds), *Antike Kunstwerke aus der Sammlung Ludwig*, vol. 1 (Mainz: von Zabern, 1979), pp. 182–5, and 'Eine unteritalische Vasendarstellung des Laokoon-Mythos', in Berger and Lullies, *Antike Kunstwerke aus der Sammlung Ludwig*, pp. 239–48, which also contains a depiction of the missing fragments from the Ruvo collection; Schauenburg, 'Götterstatuen', pp. 294–7.

25 See also B. Andreae, *Laokoon und die Gründung Roms* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1994<sup>3</sup>).



**PART IV**

**HISTORIOGRAPHY**



# THE GREEK GODS IN LATE NINETEENTH- AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY GERMAN AND BRITISH SCHOLARSHIP

*Michael Konaris*

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries constitute a crucial period in the history of the study of the Greek gods. These years witnessed the demise of approaches that had been influential for several centuries and the emergence of others, the impact of which is still felt in the discipline.

In this final chapter I examine both declining and emerging approaches to the Greek gods in German and British scholarship in this period with a primary, although not exclusive, focus on Apollo as a case study. On the German side, I look at one of the last examples of the elemental model of interpretation, as it appears in the work of Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (1845–1923), and at two alternative theories, the theory of universal gods of Ernst Curtius (1814–96) and the theory of *Sondergötter* of Hermann Usener (1834–1905). On the British side, I look at the interpretation of the Greek gods in the new context created by anthropology in the last years of the nineteenth century in the work of Lewis Richard Farnell (1856–1934) and Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928).

I am particularly interested in the role played by broader cultural and religious factors in the formulation of, and opposition to, models of interpretation of the Greek gods in the scholarship of the period.

## 1. ELEMENTAL GODS: WILHELM HEINRICH ROSCHER<sup>1</sup>

The theory that the major Greek gods had been gods of natural elements has had a remarkably long and influential career in the history

I would like to thank Prof. Jan Bremmer and Prof. Robert Parker for their comments.

<sup>1</sup> For information on the biographical background see J. Hillman, *Pan and the Nightmare* (Texas: Spring, 1979).

of the study of Greek religion. Ultimately going back to antiquity, it appeared under various forms in Renaissance and Enlightenment mythography.<sup>2</sup> In the nineteenth century it enjoyed a remarkable degree of prominence, occupying for its greater part a predominant position in scholarship, until, as will be seen in the course of this chapter, it became increasingly contested towards the century's close to fade in the early twentieth century.

Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher was one of the last representatives of this theory. Roscher was a scholar in the tradition of Indo-European comparative mythology. Emerging in the 1850s on the model of comparative linguistics, Indo-European comparative mythology, as practised by scholars such as Adalbert Kuhn (1812–81) and Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), had been based on the premise that the comparison and etymological analysis of the names of the gods of the various Indo-European religions could offer insights into their nature.<sup>3</sup> Roscher modified the methodology of Indo-European comparative mythology in two respects. He maintained that the comparative study of the religions of the Greeks and the Romans, two Indo-European peoples particularly close in terms of language, held greater promise than pan-Indo-European comparison. It could yield, he asserted, as secure results as the comparison of Greek and Latin grammar. Moreover, he argued for comparing the Greek and the Roman gods in terms of their conception rather than in terms of their names.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, he presented a series of comparative monographs in the 1870s and 1880s, beginning with a study of Apollo and Mars in 1873. In his view, the comparison of Apollo to Mars revealed broad-ranging similarities: both gods had a military and an oracular function; both were associated with the protection of colonies; that their festivals and sacred days were celebrated at the same time; that they had the same symbols in the wolf, the hawk and the laurel; most importantly, that they had both by origin been solar gods.<sup>5</sup> For Roscher, the similarities between Apollo and Mars could only be explained on the assumption that the two gods had originally been identical at a remote period in the past when a single Graeco-Roman *Urvolk* had existed. Roscher further suggested that a comparative

2 O. Gruppe, *Geschichte der klassischen Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte während des Mittelalters im Abendland und während der Neuzeit*, 1921, Suppl. 4 to W. H. Roscher and K. Ziegler (eds), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 10 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884–1937), pp. 35, 81.

3 F. Max Müller, *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green, 1897), 1, pp. 21ff.

4 W. H. Roscher, *Studien zur Vergleichenden Mythologie der Griechen und Römer. I: Apollon und Mars* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1873), pp. 2ff.

5 Ibid., pp. 5–7.

study of other pairs of Greek and Roman gods, such as Jupiter and Zeus and Juno and Hera, would also point in the direction of original identity.<sup>6</sup>

I would like to focus on the solar model which Roscher employed for the interpretation of Apollo. *Mutatis mutandis*, it may serve as an example of his method of explanation of the Greek gods in general. Roscher maintained that the view that Apollo was by origin a solar god was virtually uncontested in the scholarship of the period. As a result, he did not argue at length in its support. He claimed that Apolline epithets such as Lykeios, Lykêgenês and Aiglêtês clearly designated Apollo as a god of light.<sup>7</sup> In his later article on Apollo in the *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* in 1884 he asserted that his comparative study had supplied further evidence: it had demonstrated that Apollo was identical to Mars, whom Roscher regarded as a solar god. It followed that Apollo must have been a solar god too.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, in his study of Juno and Hera Roscher held that the conclusive argument for viewing Hera as a moon goddess was her identity with the moon goddess Juno.<sup>9</sup> One notes the circularity in these arguments from comparison.

Among nineteenth-century advocates of the view that the origins of the Greek gods had been elemental, a tendency can be discerned in varying degrees to ascribe to these origins considerable explanatory power. Roscher represents an extreme example. His claim that most cultic and mythic features of Apollo could only be explained on the hypothesis that he had originally been a solar deity is characteristic.<sup>10</sup> In his view, Apollo's oracular function derived from the notion of an affinity between light and prophecy through the concept of spiritual light; his military function from the conception of the sun god as a warrior; his association with agriculture from the importance of the sun for the growth of vegetation; his plague-sending aspect from the belief that the hot summer sun was a source of disease. Roscher further speculated that Apollo may have been considered to be a protector of colonies because sunny weather was required for the sending of colonists overseas. The slaying of Python symbolized the victory of

6 Ibid., pp. 92–3.

7 Ibid., pp. 16–17.

8 W. H. Roscher, 'Apollon', in W. H. Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884), 1, pp. 422–49 at 422.

9 W. H. Roscher, *Studien zur Vergleichenden Mythologie der Griechen und Römer. II: Juno und Hera* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1875), pp. 2, 27.

10 Roscher, *Apollon und Mars*, p. 16.

the sun god over the power of winter, and so on.<sup>11</sup> In a similar manner, Roscher held that most aspects of Hera were to be explained via reference to her origins as a moon goddess, of Athena via reference to her origins as a storm goddess, and so forth.<sup>12</sup> Roscher's interpretative monomania exposed him to heavy criticism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and arguably contributed to the discrediting of the theory that the Greek gods had been elemental.<sup>13</sup>

The focus of criticism on the shortcomings of Roscher's methodology has diverted attention from one of the most interesting aspects of his work, namely his collection of material concerning the role of numbers in the worship of the Greek gods and especially of Apollo. Roscher called attention to the point that the seventh day of each month was sacred to Apollo, that his birthday fell on the seventh of the month and that periods of seven and nine days and years were recurrent in his worship. In Roscher's view, the importance of the numbers seven and nine derived from the measurement of time on the basis of the seven- and nine-day phases of the moon. He noted that, in addition to the seventh day of each month, the *noumenia*, the *dichomenia*, the *eikas* and the *triakas*, all the important days therefore for the division of the lunar month, were sacred to Apollo. For Roscher, this indicated that Apollo was conceived as lord of the solar year and of the division of the year into seasons. This suggestion, he argued, was further corroborated by rituals in Apolline festivals such as the carrying of a piece of wood decorated with bronze balls said to represent the sun, the moon and the stars in the Boeotian Daphnephoria.<sup>14</sup> Irrespective of the plausibility of his explanation, in drawing attention to the importance of numbers seven and nine in the worship of Apollo and in maintaining that sacred days were not randomly picked but were related to the character of the gods, Roscher touched on issues which have tended to be under-discussed in the discipline.<sup>15</sup>

11 Ibid. pp. 6, 20–1, 40–1, 60ff, 70, 82; compare H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion. 2: Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 289–90.

12 Roscher, *Juno und Hera*, p. 2; W. H. Roscher, *Nektar und Ambrosia: Mit einem Anhang über die Grundbedeutung der Aphrodite und Athene* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), pp. 93ff.

13 For example, Farnell would say of Roscher's methodology in the first volume of his *Cults*: 'one cannot help feeling the unreality of this, which seems the reductio ad absurdum of the physical-allegorical theory': L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896–1909), 1, pp. 6–8.

14 Roscher, *Apollon und Mars*, p. 20, W. H. Roscher, *Die Sieben- und Neunzahl im Kultus und Mythos der Griechen* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1904), pp. 3ff, 8–9, 54.

15 Though see M. P. Nilsson, *Die Entstehung und religiöse Bedeutung des griechischen Kalenders* (Lund: Gleerup, 1962<sup>2</sup>), pp. 48–9. See also F. Graf, *Apollo* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 140.

Roscher's influence was most strongly felt through the *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (1884–1937). As long as he lived, Roscher was its driving force and the contributor of articles on Apollo, Athena, Hera, Hermes and others, in which he reiterated the elemental interpretations that he had put forward in his earlier monographs. Although in the last volumes the elemental aspect was watered down, the *Lexikon* can be seen as the last grand bastion of the elemental method of interpretation.<sup>16</sup>

Emphasis should be placed on the point that in contrast to the view advanced by Schiller that there was a sharp distinction between ancient emotionally detached and modern romantic attitudes towards nature.<sup>17</sup> The assumption often appears in nineteenth-century works in the elemental tradition that the worship of elemental gods had arisen out of an attitude towards nature that was comparable to modern romantic attitudes. The case of Roscher provides an example. In an essay bearing the revealing title *Das tiefe Naturgefühl der Griechen und Römer in seiner historischen Entwicklung* Roscher argued that the ancients possessed a keen feeling for nature which was discernible *inter alia* in their religion. Like other nineteenth-century scholars in the elemental tradition, such as Max Müller and Ludwig Preller (1808–61), Roscher suggested that ancient myths, which he tended to construe as nature myths, were akin to the most beautiful romantic nature poetry of his own times. In the case of Apollo, he maintained that his worship as sun god presented one with beautiful *Naturanschauungen*.<sup>18</sup> This resonance of the ancient theory that the Greek gods had been elemental with modern romantic feelings for nature arguably explains in part the prominent position it occupied in nineteenth-century scholarship.<sup>19</sup>

## 2 UNIVERSAL GODS: ERNST CURTIUS<sup>20</sup>

The elemental method of interpretation exemplified by Roscher met with opposition from Ernst Curtius. Best known for his *Griechische*

16 W. Burkert, 'Griechische Mythologie und die Geistesgeschichte der Moderne', in W. den Boer (ed.), *Les Etudes Classiques aux XIXe et XXe siècles: leur place dans l'histoire des idées* (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1980), pp. 159–207 at 168.

17 F. Schiller, 'Ueber naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung', in *Schillers Werke*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt: Insel, 1966), pp. 287–368 at 301.

18 W. H. Roscher, *Das tiefe Naturgefühl der Griechen und Römer in seiner historischen Entwicklung* (Meissen: Klinkicht and Sohn, 1875), pp. 1–2, 4, 6.

19 Compare Burkert, 'Griechische Mythologie', p. 169.

20 For information on the biographical background see F. Curtius, *Ernst Curtius: ein Lebensbild in Briefen* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1903).

*Geschichte* (1858–67) and the archaeological excavations at Olympia (1875–81), Curtius was also one of the last great advocates of the ‘historical-critical’ approach to Greek religion pioneered by his teacher, Karl Otfried Müller (1797–1840), and continued by Heinrich Dietrich Müller (1819–93).<sup>21</sup> Both his opposition to the elemental method and his advocacy of the historical-critical approach reflect a pious viewpoint. It should be stressed in this context that Curtius had been brought up in an environment of Protestant piety and remained a deeply religious man to the end of his life.<sup>22</sup>

The fundamental assumption of the ‘historical-critical’ approach was that Greek polytheism of the classical period was the end-product of a long process of historical development that had witnessed the unification of the worships of Greek tribal gods.<sup>23</sup> Drawing on Karl Otfried Müller’s view that originally the Greeks had conceived of the divine in general terms, Heinrich Dietrich Müller had put forward the thesis that the Greek tribes originally had tended to worship universal gods. The implication was that originally each Greek tribe had essentially no need but of a single universal god. It thus amounted to a form of qualified *Urmonotheismus*, the theory on the origins of Greek religion favoured in Christianizing historiography.<sup>24</sup>

In his *Studien zur Geschichte des Griechischen Olymps* (1890) Curtius reiterated Heinrich Dietrich Müller’s thesis with greater force. He maintained that the theory that different elements of nature had given rise to the conception of the major Greek gods failed to do justice to the genuine core of religion. For Curtius, the idea of God was innate and was associated with limitless power.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, he argued that originally every Olympian god had been invested with universal powers. In his view, feeling the insufficiency of their own strength, the early Greek worshippers had been in need of gods that could help them in all situations.<sup>26</sup> Curtius’ claim that a feeling of the inadequacy of human powers led to the conception of universal gods arguably suggests the

21 E. Curtius, *Studien zur Geschichte des Griechischen Olymps* (Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1890), p. 15. See also O. Kern, *Ernst Curtius* (Berlin, 1896), pp. 7–8.

22 A. H. Borbein, ‘Ernst Curtius’, in M. Erbe (ed.), *Berlinische Lebensbilder Geisteswissenschaftler* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1989), pp. 157–74 at 163; Curtius, *Ernst Curtius*, p. viii.

23 H. D. Müller, *Mythologie der Griechischen Stämme* II.1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1861), p. 23.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 211–15.

25 Curtius, *Studien*, pp. 14–15; see also E. Curtius, ‘Studien zur Geschichte der Artemis’, in E. Curtius, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, 2 vols (Berlin: Hertz, 1894), 2, pp. 1–21 at 21.

26 Curtius, *Studien*, p. 11.



influence of Schleiermacher in so far as it recalls his account of piety as based on a feeling of absolute dependence on God.<sup>27</sup>

Gods whom even Heinrich Dietrich Müller had regarded as departmental, such as Poseidon, in Curtius' opinion had not originally had their authority limited to a specific department. Curtius asserted that in places like Corinth, for example, far from being associated only with sea, Poseidon had been considered to be responsible for everything that conduced to the prosperity of the city, from horse-raising and viticulture to artistic skills. He was, therefore, to be seen as a 'zeusartiger Gott' who gradually became predominantly a sea god solely because his worship initially developed among coastal peoples.<sup>28</sup>

The theory that the Olympians had originally been universal gods led Curtius to draw drastic implications for the way they should be studied. He called for a cessation of attempts to establish particular spheres of divine influence. Rather, he argued that the task of scholars should be to investigate the changes which the once common conception of universal gods was subjected to among the various Greek tribes.<sup>29</sup>

Curtius' pious perspective is further visible in his account of Apollo. Curtius celebrated the worship of Apollo as it developed in the archaic and classical period as a momentous event in the history of Greek culture. He placed special emphasis on the role of Apollo at Delphi. In his eyes, the Pythian god who communicated to mortals the will of his father was a force standing for order and monotheism amid the chaos of Greek polytheism. In addition, Curtius laid stress on Delphi as exercising a civilizing influence all over the Greek world, promoting the ideals of harmony, moderation and sobriety.<sup>30</sup>

The pious approach of Curtius in the form of the theory of universal gods and of his exaltation of the worship of Apollo soon appeared obsolete.<sup>31</sup> However, his classicizing portrayal of the ethos of Greek

27 D. Lange, 'Neugestaltung christlicher Glaubenslehre', in D. Lange (ed.), *Friedrich Schleiermacher 1768–1834: Theologe-Philosoph-Pädagoge* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985), pp. 85–105 at 97.

28 Curtius, *Studien*, p. 10.

29 E. Curtius, 'Die Griechische Götterlehre vom geschichtlichen Standpunkt', in E. Curtius, *Alterthum und Gegenwart Gesammelte Reden und Vorträge*, 2 vols (Berlin: Hertz, 1882), 2, pp. 50–71 at 67; Curtius, *Studien*, pp. 14–15.

30 E. Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, 3 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1858–67), 1, pp. 48ff, 400–1.

31 In a letter to Nietzsche, for example, Rohde would protest against Curtius' account of Greek religion and, particularly, against his portrayal of Apollo, which he saw as symbolic of a superficial understanding of Greek culture that failed to do justice to the role of Dionysos: see O. Crusius, *Erwin Rohde: ein biographischer Versuch* (Tübingen and Leipzig: Mohr, 1902), p. 55. It is notable that the concept

religion in terms of harmony and moderation would have a long-lasting influence, resonating in the work of Farnell and Wilamowitz.<sup>32</sup>

### 3 SONDERGÖTTER: HERMANN USENER<sup>33</sup>

The polar opposite to Curtius' theory of universal gods was the theory of *Sondergötter* propounded by Hermann Usener. Usener provides a further example of a classical scholar modifying the methodology of Indo-European comparative mythology. In his studies, he employed an Indo-European comparative framework, albeit of a limited form. Moreover, like the leading exponents of Indo-European comparative mythology, Kuhn and Max Müller, he regarded the analysis of divine names as a primary tool for the student of ancient religions.<sup>34</sup> In his view, however, the chief *comparandum* should not consist in the names of the gods as advocated by Kuhn and Max Müller but rather in their conceptions.<sup>35</sup> At the level of methodology, therefore, there is a parallel between Roscher and Usener. Nevertheless, they offered highly divergent accounts, especially with respect to the question of the origins of the gods.

In his magnum opus, *Götternamen* (1896), Usener put forward a study of the emergence and development of divine conceptions in three Indo-European religions: the Greek, the Roman and the Lithuanian.

(footnote 31 *continued*)

of universal gods reappears in the work of W. F. Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands* (Bonn: Cohen, 1929), p. 207, 'Immer ist die Gottheit eine *Totalität*, eine ganze Welt in ihrer Vollendung. Das trifft auch auf die obersten Götter, Zeus, Athene und Apollon, die Träger der höchsten Ideale, zu. Keiner von ihnen stellt eine einzelne Tugend vor Augen, keiner von ihnen ist nur in *einer* Richtung des vielbewegten Lebens anzutreffen, ein jeder will den ganzen Umkreis des menschlichen Daseins mit seinem eigentümlichen Geist erfüllen, gestalten und erleuchten.'

32 For Wilamowitz as being in the idealizing tradition of Curtius see K. Christ, *Hellas: Griechische Geschichte und Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft* (Munich: Beck, 1999), pp. 65–6. For parallels between Curtius' and Wilamowitz's account of Apollo see my forthcoming 'Apollo in nineteenth-century scholarship: the case of K. O. Müller' in the proceedings of *Current Approaches to Religion in Ancient Greece: An International Symposium, Athens, 17th–19th April 2008*.

33 For information on the biographical background see L. Deubner, 'Hermann Usener', *Biographisches Jahrbuch für die Altertumswissenschaft* 31 (1908), pp. 53–74; J. N. Bremmer, 'Hermann Usener', in W. W. Briggs and W. M. Calder III (eds), *Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Garland, 1990), pp. 462–78.

34 H. Usener, *Götternamen: Versuch einer Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung* (Bonn: Cohen, 1896), pp. 3–5.

35 H. Usener, 'Mythologie', in A. Dieterich (ed.), *Vorträge und Aufsätze von Hermann Usener* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1907), pp. 39–65 at 41; compare A. Wessels, *Ursprungszauber: Zur Rezeption von Hermann Useners Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), p. 27.

This he regarded as one of the most important questions confronting the student of the history of religion inasmuch as it touched on the broader question of how polytheism had emerged.<sup>36</sup> Usener's starting point was the divine lists in the Roman pontifical books which contained names of gods that appeared to be associated with specific activities. Typically, the meaning of their names was transparent, designating their area of responsibility. Usener maintained that these gods tended neither to be conceived in fully personal terms nor to have myths attached to them. By way of example, he cited such deities as the Veruactor and the Reparator, who were responsible for different stages of the cultivation of the fields.<sup>37</sup> To refer to this class of gods Usener employed the term *Sondergötter*.

Usener suggested that *Sondergötter* were also observable in Greek and Lithuanian religion. In his view, they represented a very old conception of the divine which had provided the foundation stones for the conception of 'high' personal gods. Despite their great antiquity, however, *Sondergötter* could not have formed the original conception of the divine inasmuch as they constituted a generic category. Therefore, Usener maintained that prior to the stage of the *Sondergötter* there had been a stage which had seen the deification of individual as opposed to generic phenomena – the stage of the *Augenblicksgötter*. Usener claimed that that stage was not a mere theoretical postulate. Lithuanian religion, he argued, provided evidence for the existence of *Augenblicksgötter*. In his opinion, one was entitled to infer that the earliest stages of Greek and Roman religion had also witnessed the worship of *Augenblicksgötter*. Some scattered evidence for their worship, he argued, could, in fact, be observed. Thus he suggested that Parthenopaios' oath by his spear in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* pointed in the direction of an original worship of the spear itself as a god.<sup>38</sup>

In Usener's view, personal gods developed gradually out of *Sondergötter* through a linguistic process.<sup>39</sup> In the course of time, he argued, the names of certain *Sondergötter* ceased to be understood, thus becoming proper names. At this point the way was opened for the development of their personalities in myth. Once fully personal gods emerged, they started to absorb or to subordinate the remaining *Sondergötter*, especially those of related spheres. The names of these *Sondergötter* became attached to the names of the personal gods in the form of epithets.<sup>40</sup>

36 Usener, *Götternamen*, p. 5.

37 Ibid., pp. 75ff.

38 Ibid., pp. 109ff, 122ff, 279–80, 285.

39 Ibid., p. 316.

40 Ibid., pp. 316–17.

To illustrate what he regarded as the groundbreaking implications of his theory, Usener purposefully selected the case of Apollo, citing Roscher's assertion that Apollo's solar origins were a widely accepted hypothesis in scholarship.<sup>41</sup> According to Usener, the etymological analysis of the name of Apollo indicated that it was cognate with the Latin verb *pellere*. 'Apollo', therefore, had, in his opinion, originally been a designation of a *Sondergott* with an apotropaic function rather than a solar god.<sup>42</sup> As, with the passage of time, the meaning of his name became obscured, Apollo started to develop into a personal god and to absorb *Sondergötter* with functions related to the aversion of evil such as purification and healing. Given the association in antiquity between solar light and protection and health, Usener held that an apotropaic god like Apollo had to acquire a solar aspect.<sup>43</sup> Here he came close to a mode of exegesis that is reminiscent of Roscher's.<sup>44</sup> This is further visible in the case of his claim that Apolline epithets such as Chrysaoros indicated a solar dimension and that Apollo Agyieus was entrusted with the protection of roads because of the importance of the sun for orientation.<sup>45</sup>

In this context, it should be noted that the ancient worship of heavenly light as allegedly evidenced by the worship of gods of the sky like Zeus struck a note with Usener. He suggested that heavenly light was capable of inspiring the most sublime religious emotions. Moreover, he placed emphasis on the redeeming, purificatory effect that the advent of daylight could have even on modern humans.<sup>46</sup> In a further parallel to Roscher, therefore, the ancient worship of heavenly light seems to have resonated with Usener's own appreciation of the qualities of light. Again it is arguable that this resonance conduced to his qualified adherence to a solar paradigm in the case of Apollo.

For Usener, the most important implication of his theory of *Augenblicks-* and *Sondergötter* was that it refuted theories of Indo-European *Urmonotheismus*.<sup>47</sup> Usener confessed that earlier in his career he had been in favour of *Urmonotheismus*. However, as a consequence of his acquaintance with the alleged evidence of *Augenblicksgötter* in Lithuanian polytheism he revised his position.<sup>48</sup> He now came to regard monotheism as the result of progress in religious thought. In

41 Ibid., pp. 303–4.

42 Ibid., pp. 309–10, 312.

43 Ibid., p. 333.

44 Bremmer, 'Usener', p. 470.

45 Usener, *Götternamen*, pp. 333 n. 5, 190.

46 Ibid., pp. 177–8, 184.

47 Ibid., pp. 273ff.

48 Ibid., pp. 274, 276.

fact, the pattern of development from *Augenblicks-* to *Sondergötter* to personal gods he set out in the *Götternamen* amounts to one of the most forceful attacks on *Urmonotheismus* to appear in nineteenth-century scholarship.

Usener did not confine himself to making a case against *Urmonotheismus*. He asserted that monotheism *stricto sensu* could not develop within the context of the Greek and Roman religions. The revelation of pure monotheism, he emphasized, only came to the Graeco-Roman world with Christianity. In his view, however, Christian monotheism became corrupted as a result of its encounter with Graeco-Roman polytheism. Usener stressed that such aspects of Christianity as the dogma of the Trinity, the worship of Mary and the worship of saints marked a deviation from the strict monotheism of the original Christian revelation, a deviation that was to be attributed to the corrosive impact of ancient tendencies towards polytheism.<sup>49</sup>

In this context, it should be underscored that, for Usener, it was incumbent upon historians of the religions of antiquity to identify and help cleanse 'antiquated' elements in the modern religious conscience.<sup>50</sup> Jan Bremmer has drawn attention to two pieces of evidence that shed light on Usener's agenda. First, there is the testimony of Franz Overbeck (1837–1905), who maintained that in 1904 Usener had told him that his main interest in pursuing a comparative study of religion had been to prove its paganism to the Catholic church. It should be noted that the ideas which Usener set out in the *Götternamen* had been germinating over a long period of time, during which the German empire had been experiencing the convulsions of the *Kulturkampf*. The second piece of evidence consists in a letter written by Usener in 1902. In that letter Usener stated that he had been guided in his studies of the ancient church by a 'strictly Protestant spirit' and expressed the hope that through that spirit 'the purification and elucidation of the life of our church' would be achieved.<sup>51</sup>

In this respect, there is a parallel between the work of Usener and the emergence of a historically orientated approach in German theology in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The theologian and church historian Adolf Harnack (1851–1930), for example, argued in his work on the history of dogmata (1886–90) that historical research into the origins of Christianity could cast light on what were its essential as

49 Ibid., pp. 116, 348–9; Usener, 'Mythologie', pp. 46–7.

50 Usener, 'Mythologie', p. 65.

51 Bremmer, 'Usener', p. 470; compare R. Schlesier, *Kulte, Mythen und Gelehrte: Anthropologie der Antike seit 1800* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), p. 199.

opposed to its historically conditioned aspects, and thus contribute to the purification of Protestantism from such Catholic elements as had survived the Reformation.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the 1890s saw the formation of the 'Religionsgeschichtliche Schule' at Göttingen, a group consisting of theologians such as Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926) and Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932), whose guiding principle was the study of early Christianity in its historical context and the assessment of the influences it had been subjected to from late Judaism, the religion of Babylon and the religions of the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>53</sup> Usener has been claimed as one of the forerunners of this theological school.<sup>54</sup>

It is interesting to note against this background that Usener held that the worship of saints suggested a polytheistic way of thinking that was essentially similar to that underlying the worship of the *Sondergötter*. As one had once turned to the *Sondergötter* for one's specific needs, so one in the Christian era turned to the various Christian saints.<sup>55</sup> Time and again, Usener underscored that the examination of the practices of the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches provided insights into the religions of antiquity.<sup>56</sup> This invites the suggestion that his understanding of the role of Christian saints as involving tightly defined authority over specific departments played a part in his formulation of the theory that *Sondergötter* had constituted early, basic conceptions of the divine in ancient polytheisms. The theory of the *Sondergötter*, therefore, illustrates how the interpretation of the religions of antiquity in nineteenth-century scholarship could be enmeshed in contemporary religious polemics.

As mentioned, Usener's concept of *Sondergötter* was the opposite of Curtius' concept of universal gods. It is tempting to see the former as a reaction to the latter. However, although Usener criticized theories of *Urmonotheismus* in the *Götternamen*, he did not engage specifically with Curtius'. Be that as it may, Curtius and Usener represent two polar extremes in the debate in nineteenth-century scholarship over *Urmonotheismus*: Curtius piously arguing for *Urmonotheismus* and for monotheistic elements in polytheism, Usener subversively arguing for *Urpolytheismus* and for polytheistic elements in monotheism.

52 T. Nipperdey, *Religion im Umbruch* (Munich: Beck, 1988), pp. 71, 73–4, G. Lüdeman and M. Schröder, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen: Eine Dokumentation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987), pp. 33–6.

53 Nipperdey, *Religion*, p. 74; Lüdeman and Schröder, *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, p. 7.

54 R. Kany, *Mnemosyne als Programm: Geschichte, Erinnerung und die Andacht zum Unbedeutenden im Werk von Usener, Warburg und Benjamin* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1987), p. 71.

55 Usener, *Götternamen*, pp. 116, 122.

56 Usener, 'Mythologie', pp. 47, 63.

Despite the respect that Usener's name commanded, his *Götternamen* met with strong criticism. Farnell devoted an article to showing that the Greek evidence did not fit Usener's theory.<sup>57</sup> He argued that transparent names did not necessarily imply a non-personal conception or a lack of myths.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, he maintained that, in at least some cases, it was demonstrable that divine figures bearing transparent names like Nike had not given rise to, but rather had developed themselves from, major personal gods.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Usener's most illustrious student, Wilamowitz (1848–1931), charged his teacher with employing an overly rationalistic approach to religion. Invoking *Faust* he argued instead for the primacy of emotion.<sup>60</sup> For all the criticism levelled against the *Götternamen*, however, it has been recognized that Usener's *Augenblicks*- and *Sondergötter* remain useful categories of analysis for the study of polytheistic religions.<sup>61</sup>

#### 4 THE GREEK GODS BETWEEN GERMAN ALTERTHUMSWISSENSCHAFT AND BRITISH ANTHROPOLOGY: LEWIS RICHARD FARNELL<sup>62</sup>

Among the audience of the lectures that Curtius gave at Berlin in the early 1880s was the young Lewis Richard Farnell.<sup>63</sup> After studying classics at Oxford, Farnell visited universities in Germany, as was common practice among British classical scholars at the time.<sup>64</sup> German scholarship, on the one hand, and the emergence of

57 L. R. Farnell, 'The place of the "Sonder-götter" in Greek polytheism', in H. Balfour et al., *Anthropological Essays Presented to Eduard Burnett Tylor* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), pp. 81–100.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 95–6, 99.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

60 'Hat denn Faust Unrecht, wenn er sagt, "Gefühl ist alles"? . . . zu einem Begriffe betet kein Mensch': U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1931), 1, p. 11; compare A. Henrichs, "'Der Glaube der Hellenen'": Religionsgeschichte als Glaubensbekenntnis und Kulturkritik', in W. M. Calder III et al. (eds), *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), pp. 263–305 at 289. See also H. J. Mette, 'Nekrolog einer Epoche: Hermann Usener und seine Schule. Ein wirkungsgeschichtlicher Rückblick auf die Jahre 1856–1879', *Lustrum* 22 (1979–80), pp. 5–106 at 80.

61 Henrichs, "'Der Glaube'", p. 288. J. Scheid and J. Svenbro, 'Les Götternamen de Hermann Usener: une grande Théogonie', in N. Belayche et al. (eds), *Nommer les dieux* (Turnhout: Brepols and Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), pp. 93–103 at 98, 102.

62 For information on the biographical background see L. R. Farnell, *An Oxonian Looks Back* (London: Hopkinson, 1934).

63 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

anthropology, on the other hand, provide the context for his greatest work, *The Cults of the Greek States* (in five volumes, 1896–1909).

In the introduction to the *Cults* Farnell stated that after an early period of influence he had come ‘to distrust the method and point of view that were then and are even now prevalent in German scholarship’.<sup>65</sup> This was a tendentious reference to the method of interpretation of the Greek gods in terms of their elemental origins, especially as practised by scholars such as Roscher. Farnell overlooked the criticism that was being raised against it in Germany, not least, as seen, by one of his teachers, Curtius. Conversely, Farnell hailed the contribution to the study of Greek religion of the rising discipline of anthropology in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> He welcomed, in particular, the insight provided by Tylor’s concept of survival. By employing this concept, anthropological writers like Andrew Lang (1844–1912) and James G. Frazer (1854–1941), Farnell maintained, had demonstrated that ‘mythology is not merely highly figurative conversation about the weather’, as he designated elemental accounts of Greek mythology, but that ‘like ritual itself [it] is often a reflexion of by-gone society and institutions’.<sup>67</sup> Farnell claimed that in the field of anthropology ‘English research has taken the lead.’ Thus, although he expressed his regret ‘that hostile criticism of much German work should take so prominent a place in my book’, his opposition to the elemental method and praise of anthropology suggest to an extent an effort to demonstrate the superiority of English over German scholarship.<sup>68</sup>

In the *Cults* Farnell launched a large-scale attack against elemental interpretations of the Greek gods, the spearhead of which consisted in his argumentation against the view that Apollo had by origin been a solar god. As seen, Roscher had claimed in 1873 that the theory that Apollo’s origins were solar was virtually uncontested. In his review of Roscher’s *Lexikon* in 1888, Farnell himself had taken it for granted.<sup>69</sup> Almost twenty years later Farnell attested to its lingering popularity despite the criticism of Curtius and Usener. In the fourth volume of his *Cults* in 1907, in which he examined Apollo, Farnell maintained that ‘the solar theory, which ruled so much of the nineteenth century speculation on ancient polytheism, still dazzles many people’s eyes’.<sup>70</sup>

65 Farnell, *Cults* 1, p. x.

66 Ibid., pp. vii–viii. Farnell’s stance towards anthropology became increasingly reserved in the latter stages of his career: Farnell, *Cults* 3, p. iv.

67 Farnell, *Cults* 1, p. 9.

68 Ibid., pp. x, 8.

69 L. R. Farnell, ‘Roscher’s Lexicon of Mythology – Greek section’, *CR* 5 (1888), pp. 133–8 at 135.

70 Farnell, *Cults* 4, p. 136.



In his examination of Apollo Farnell made a point of not engaging in a discussion of his origins. For all their differences, Roscher, Usener and Curtius, as well as anthropological writers, reflected a powerful tenet in nineteenth-century scholarship in attaching importance to the discovery of the origins of the Greek gods.<sup>71</sup> Farnell maintained that preoccupation with the question of origins tended to obscure the issue of possible differences between original and subsequent conceptions of the gods. His own subversive view was that origins were, in fact, essentially irrelevant to understanding the Greek gods of the historical period.<sup>72</sup> Thus he maintained that in the case of Apollo the question to be considered should be whether 'in the historic period this deity was recognized as the sun-god by the ordinary Greek, or, if not, whether the most ancient myths, cult-titles or ritual reveal this as the prehistoric conception'.<sup>73</sup>

Accordingly, Farnell subjected to scrutiny a wide range of Apolline material. His strategy was characterized by an emphasis on the practical and the coincidental as opposed to the method of explanation via reference to a notional solar *Grundbedeutung*. Thus he suggested that Apollo's epithet *Hêoios* did not necessarily indicate a solar dimension, but 'may have arisen from the eastward position of his statue or temple which caught the first rays of the morning or from a sacrifice offered to him at dawn'.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, he explained away the sacrifices to Helios and the Horai in the Pyanepsia and Thargelia by claiming that 'associations of the most diverse divinities are so frequent in Greek ritual that very little can be deduced from them concerning the question of original affinity'.<sup>75</sup>

Farnell's account of the Boeotian Daphnephoria provides an illustration of the difference between an anthropologically influenced and a solar paradigm. As seen, for Roscher, the carrying of a branch decorated with metallic balls which were said to represent the sun, the moon and the stars indicated that Apollo was conceived as a solar god. Farnell, by contrast, argued that, in the light of the work of Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831–80) and Frazer, this ritual should be recognized as belonging to the class of 'the maypole processions, universal in the peasant-religion of Europe, of which the object is to quicken the vitalizing powers of the year in the middle of spring or at the beginning of the summer'. Rather than an instance of solar worship, it was to be seen as a piece of sun magic, an 'integral part of vegetation-ritual',

71 Schlesier, *Kulte*, p. 158.

72 Farnell, *Cults* 1, p. 8.

73 Farnell, *Cults* 4, p. 136.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 143.

which 'was immemorial in Greece, and owing to different local accidents, attached itself to different higher worships, here to an Athena, there to an Apollo'.<sup>76</sup> Farnell's conclusion was that, like the other major Greek gods, Apollo should be seen as possessing an ethical personality that was too complex to be explained in elemental terms and that his identification with Helios represented but a late development in Greek religion.<sup>77</sup> Owing to his meticulous review of a large body of evidence, his criticism was more effective than Usener's or Curtius' and his verdict was seen as settling the question of the alleged solar nature of the early Apollo.<sup>78</sup>

It should be emphasized that, as for Curtius, for Farnell, the scholar who played an instrumental role in the demise of the millennia-old elemental theories, the question of whether Apollo had been a solar god and, more broadly, of whether the Greek gods had been elemental had important implications for the character of Greek religion. In his eyes, the worship of elemental as opposed to ethical gods was not consonant with an advanced religion, outstanding for its high moral standards, its sobriety and brightness, which is how he portrayed Greek religion.<sup>79</sup> It is notable that in these respects, his portrayal of Greek religion recalls that of Curtius.<sup>80</sup> The stakes that Farnell saw vested in the debate over the elemental nature of the Greek gods make it plausible that he was inclined to deny an elemental dimension even in cases when it could conceivably provide a likely explanation.

Even so, in arguing against the search for origins and in dealing a decisive blow to elemental methods of interpretation, not least by his thorough criticism of their seemingly most securely established hypothesis, the hypothesis of the solar Apollo, Farnell contributed to the emancipation of scholarship from two themes that had exercised 'tyranny' over it in the nineteenth century and before, and paved the way for the study of the Greek gods in the twentieth century. At the

76 Ibid., pp. 284–5.

77 Farnell, *Cults* 3, p. 1; Farnell, *Cults* 4, p. 144.

78 M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* I (Munich: Beck, 1955<sup>2</sup>), p. 525 n. 3. But see A. Moreau, 'Quant Apollo devint soleil', in B. Bakhouche *et al.* (eds), *Les astres*, vol. 1 (Montpellier: 1996), pp. 11–35.

79 Farnell, *Cults* 1, p. ix; Farnell, *Cults* 4, p. 144; L. R. Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), pp. 91, 150; compare J. Henderson, 'Farnell's *Cults*: The making and breaking of Pausanias in Victorian archaeology and anthropology', in S. E. Alcock *et al.* (eds), *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 207–23 at 218.

80 Farnell's portrayal of Greek religion is further characterized by an emphasis on the themes of sanity and manliness. In these respects it is also reminiscent of the ideals of muscular Christianity; see D. E. Hall (ed.), *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

same time, however, for all of Farnell's dismissal of German scholarship as obsolete, the ethos of Greek religion which his work promoted was deeply rooted in nineteenth-century German scholarship.

## 5 SACRIFICE, GROUP IDENTITY, INITIATION: JANE ELLEN HARRISON<sup>81</sup>

At the same time that Farnell was cautiously balancing his way between old and new in Oxford, in Cambridge Jane Ellen Harrison was responding in a more subversive way to the new context for the study of Greek religion that the emergence of anthropology and sociology were creating in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

In her early writings, such as *Introductory Studies in Greek Art* (1885), Harrison displayed a tendency to idealization that stressed the pure and beautiful nature of Greek religion.<sup>82</sup> However, from the 1890s the impact of anthropology began to make itself strongly felt in her work. Thus in *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (1890), she stated that she would follow anthropological writers like Lang 'in regarding the myth-making Greek as a practical savage rather than a poet or philosopher'.<sup>83</sup>

A further source of influence for Harrison was the work of the Semitic scholar William Robertson Smith (1846–94). In his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889) Robertson Smith maintained that the religions of antiquity 'consisted entirely of institutions and practices'.<sup>84</sup> As a consequence, their study, in his view, had to begin with an examination of ritual rather than myth.<sup>85</sup> The impact of Robertson Smith on Harrison is visible in her *Prolegomena to the study of Greek religion* (1903) and her introductory statement that 'the first preliminary to any scientific understanding of Greek religion is a minute examination of its ritual'.<sup>86</sup> Drawing on evidence from ritual,

81 For information on the biographical background see J. E. Harrison, *Reminiscences of a Student's Life* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925); M. Beard, *The Invention of Jane Harrison* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); A. Robinson, *The Life and Work of Jane Ellen Harrison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

82 J. E. Harrison, *Introductory Studies in Greek Art* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1885), pp. 179–80.

83 J. E. Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (London: Macmillan, 1890), p. iii.

84 W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites. First Series: The Fundamental Institutions* (Edinburgh: Black, 1889), p. 18.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

86 J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. vii.

she argued for the vitality and pervasiveness of chthonian worships in Greek religion and, conversely, questioned the religious appeal of the worship of the Olympian gods.<sup>87</sup>

Harrison advanced more radical claims in *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (1912). Under the influence of Durkheim, she came to regard early religion as reflecting collective feeling and thinking.<sup>88</sup> Her examination of Greek religion began with an analysis of the Palaikastro hymn, which, in her view, preserved material that shed light on its origins. It is notable that if Farnell was critical of the search for origins, the discovery of the origins of Greek religion remained a primary concern for Harrison.<sup>89</sup> In her opinion, the invocation of Zeus in the hymn as Greatest Kouros by a group of Kouretes suggested that he should be seen as a projection of themselves, serving to strengthen their unity as a group.<sup>90</sup> Drawing on Van Gennep's *Les rites de passage* (1909), she further maintained that the hymn provided evidence for rituals of initiation. 'The Kouretes' she held 'are Young Men who have been initiated themselves and will initiate others, will instruct them in tribal duties and tribal dances.'<sup>91</sup> Harrison claimed that the only other Greek god attended by a group comparable to the Kouretes was Dionysos with his *thiasos*. Accordingly, she maintained that he too should be seen as a god of group solidarity and initiation.<sup>92</sup>

In Harrison's view, the hymn of the Kouretes and the worship of Dionysos suggested a distant totemistic past. For Harrison, totemism was a fundamentally social phenomenon in which the notion of group unity had been dominant and gods had been unknown. In her opinion, gods emerged gradually out of such factors as the projection of collective emotion and sacrifice, which, she emphasized, in its original form had consisted solely of sacrificers and sacrificial victims. This approach, therefore, entailed a challenge to the role of the gods. Collective emotion and sacrifice were what was primary; the gods were an epiphenomenon.<sup>93</sup>

Harrison held that instead of full-blown personal gods, early humans conceived of vague daemons, for which she coined the term *Eniautos-Daimon*. The *Eniautos-Daimon* provides an illustration of

87 Ibid., pp. ix, xi.

88 J. E. Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. xiii.

89 Schlesier, *Kulte*, pp. 158–9.

90 Harrison, *Themis*, p. xiv.

91 Ibid., p. 19.

92 Ibid., pp. 12, 30, 38.

93 Ibid., pp. 29, 118–20, 136, 148; compare Robinson, *Harrison*, p. 224.

the encounter of classical scholarship with anthropology and sociology that Harrison's work represents. At a first level, the function of the *Eniautos-Daimon* was 'to give food and increase to man and make the year go round', which it fulfilled by going through a cycle of death and revival.<sup>94</sup> In this respect, Harrison acknowledged that it had predecessors in the concepts of Corn-, Tree- and Vegetation-Spirits that appeared in the writings of Mannhardt and Frazer. She stated, however, that 'a word was wanted that should include not only vegetation, but the whole world-process of decay, death, renewal'.<sup>95</sup> At a further level, Harrison maintained that the *Eniautos-Daimon* represented the life of the group and that its ritual was 'substantially the same as the ceremony of death and resurrection enacted as a rite of tribal initiation'.<sup>96</sup>

According to Harrison, the Greek gods emerged in the course of time out of *Eniautoi-Daimones*. However, there was a stark contrast between the Olympian gods and Dionysos in the way they related to their demonic ancestors. The Olympians severed their ties to the *Eniautoi-Daimones* so utterly that Harrison asserted that they essentially constituted their very negation.<sup>97</sup> No longer vague demons, but clearly defined, individual personalities, the Olympians were endowed with the attribute of immortality and thus broke free from the cycle of death and rebirth typical of the ritual of the *Eniautoi-Daimones*.<sup>98</sup> Dionysos, however, remained closer to the *Eniautoi-Daimones*. As mentioned, the fact that, unlike the Olympians, Dionysos was accompanied by a *thiasos* suggested, in Harrison's view, that he continued to represent the projection of collective emotion. Therein, she argued, lay the grounds for the chief difference between Dionysiac and Olympian religion, the mystical aspiration to union and communion with God as opposed to the emphasis on the inseparable distance between gods and mortals.<sup>99</sup> The contrast between the mysticism of Dionysos and the restraint and reason which she associated with the Olympians is recurrent in *Prolegomena* and *Themis*. Harrison held that from very early on the Olympian gods essentially lost their religious significance and became objects of art. It was the 'mystery-god' Dionysos, she argued, who was the object of 'genuine' religious devotion. Harrison's

94 Harrison, *Themis*, p. 467.

95 Ibid., p. xvii. The concept of a *Jahresgott* reflecting the cycle of the year appears in the work of German scholars such as Heinrich Dietrich Müller and Hermann Usener, which Harrison was familiar with and which may have provided a further source of inspiration for this aspect of the *Eniautos-Daimon*.

96 Ibid. pp. xviii–xix.

97 Ibid., p. 447.

98 Ibid., pp. 467–8.

99 Ibid., p. 48.

dismissal of the Olympian gods and celebration of Dionysos reflect her own leanings towards the mystical.<sup>100</sup> However, they are not to be understood solely in terms of her religious inclinations. As Peacock has emphasized, in the eyes of Harrison 'the Olympian pantheon symbolized patriarchy and male oppression of women', as opposed to the worship of Dionysos, which preserved traces of an early matrilinear form of social organization.<sup>101</sup>

Harrison represents the most extreme example of a tendency in nineteenth-century scholarship, going back to Nietzsche, and further back to German 'romantic' scholars like Creuzer, which stressed the elements of mysticism and ecstasy in Greek religion and which stood in contrast to the tradition exemplified by Curtius and Farnell with its emphasis on moderation and sobriety.<sup>102</sup> For all the extremity of her views, in recognizing that anthropology and sociology offered new insights and opened up new possibilities, Harrison heralded a new era for the understanding of the Greek gods, the impact of which is still visible in the discipline today.<sup>103</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In his *Die Götter Griechenlands: Ihr Bild im Wandel der Religionswissenschaft* Albert Henrichs has suggested that one's image of the Greek gods cannot be definitive but is rather *situations- und zeitbedingt*.<sup>104</sup> This examination of models of interpretation of the Greek gods in German and British scholarship in the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth bears witness to the historical validity of this remark. From Roscher's elemental and Curtius' universal gods to Usener's *Sondergötter* and Farnell's complex ethical personalities, the Greek gods were subjected, in this pivotal period in the history of the discipline, to a bewildering process

100 Ibid., pp. xi, 48, 478. See also T. W. Africa, 'Aunt Glegg among the dons or taking Jane Harrison at her word', in W. M. Calder III (ed.), *The Cambridge Ritualists Reconsidered* (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 21–35 at 27. In her latter years Harrison qualified her downplaying of the religious importance of the Olympians: *Themis*, preface to second edition, p. vii; Robinson, *Harrison*, pp. 166, 197, 221.

101 S. J. Peacock, 'An awful warmth about her heart: the personal in Jane Harrison's ideas on religion', in Calder, *The Cambridge Ritualists Reconsidered*, pp. 167–84 at 177.

102 It is notable, however, that for all his emphasis on the sober nature of Greek religion, Farnell was not blind to the significance and appeal of Dionysiac ecstasy; see Farnell, *Cults* 5, pp. 108, 238.

103 A. Henrichs, *Die Götter Griechenlands: Ihr Bild im Wandel der Religionswissenschaft* (Bamberg: Buchners Verlag, 1987), p. 14.

104 Ibid., p. 32.

of re-interpretation that reflected different aesthetic, religious and moral values and concerns. For all their differences, the aforementioned scholars were on common ground in regarding the interpretation of the Greek gods as an essential part of the study of Greek religion. It is arguable that in so doing they were in part influenced by their own understanding of religion as being intertwined with the notion of God. In the work of Harrison, by contrast, amidst an extreme application of anthropological and sociological principles, the gods at times seemed to withdraw into the background. However, they would reclaim their earlier position of prominence in the writings of Wilamowitz and Walter F. Otto (1874–1958), which, in this respect, can be seen as being in the tradition of pre-anthropological nineteenth-century scholarship. The emphasis on the Greek gods as primary objects of study is a part of the heritage of this period in the history of scholarship on Greek religion that may still be of value to the discipline today.





## EPILOGUE

*Andrew Erskine*

This volume has sought to put the gods back into Greek religion, a realm from which modern scholarship with its emphasis on ritual and anthropology had rather paradoxically ousted them. When we direct our attention to the gods themselves, what is striking is the variety, both of gods and of ways of experiencing them. Which gods are important changes with place and time. Not every god makes it into everyone's pantheon; while some such as Zeus and Apollo are core members, others such as Ares and Dionysos might be included but might not. Gods may be promoted up the hierarchy in one region but not in others and they may, like Herakles, fluctuate in status between god and hero. Those gods best known to us in their Panhellenic guise may have been better known to the communities of the Greek world by their local character, which would have found expression in the traditions and folklore of the area. By studying this variety we can come closer to making sense of those who worshipped them. As Jan Bremmer puts it at the end of his chapter on Hephaistos, thinking about gods teaches us much about mortals.

Along with the variety of gods that permeated the Greek world was the multiplicity of ways they could be encountered. While the study of ritual certainly increases our understanding of Greek religion and society, it may also distract from the ancient experience of the divine. Gods could be present to the devotees of mystery cults, they could be called up by spells, they could become manifest through oracles, and they could be celebrated in festivals. Statues of gods brought the god before the people, sometimes in a very direct way as the statues were carried through the streets in sacred processions. Divine and heroic epiphanies are a recurring phenomenon in the ancient world, not only at moments of international crisis, such as Apollo's defence of Delphi against the Celts in 279 BC, but at a more mundane level in the lives

of ordinary Greeks, such as that recorded in the dedication of Meneia on the Athenian Acropolis.<sup>1</sup>

The chapters in this collection have not been restricted to the more familiar territory of the classical period but have ranged from early Greece to late antiquity. This has allowed an opportunity to examine the development of the gods and ideas about the gods over time – the rise and fall of gods, the arrival of new gods, the changing perspectives and values of the worshippers, the growing impact of Christianity. Religion may stress the traditional but it is rarely static, and the gods themselves are not exempt from this.

The scholarly predilection for classical Greece has been as evident in the study of Greek religion as in other aspects of Greek culture and history. General accounts of Greek religion have regularly identified their subject matter with the religion of classical Greece and especially of Athens, a tendency that results in a very partial picture. Consequently they turn out to end with Alexander or cover the remaining six or seven centuries in a brief closing chapter. In this way it is easy for the classical period to become the norm or even the standard by which Greek religion is evaluated. Not surprisingly this has in the past coexisted with theories of decline as an increasingly bankrupt paganism was forced to yield to Christianity; now talk is of transformations rather than decline, though the focus on classical Greece largely remains and continues to shape debate. Of course, ‘Greek religion’ is our term, one that may suggest a unity that is not there, yet the religious practices of Greeks scattered geographically and over time have much in common. This mixture of diversity and shared practice is captured in the title of Simon Price’s *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*,<sup>2</sup> which significantly does indeed cover the whole expanse from Homer to the fifth century AD. It is to this post-classical world that scholars of religion must look, not by taking some piece of later evidence, an inscription or text, and using it to throw light upon the fifth century, but rather to integrate this world more fully into our understanding of Greek religion and its gods. Instead it is almost as if Greek religion re-emerges for the conflict with Christianity.

Suppose, purely by way of hypothesis, that the study of Greek religion had focused not on classical Greece but on the early centuries AD. How, if at all, would that affect our understanding of Greek religion, or more particularly of the Greek gods, the theme of this

1 *IG* II/III2 4326 = *SIG3* 3.1151, discussed in Henrichs, this volume, Chapter 1, with bibliography on epiphanies in nn. 58–60.

2 S. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

volume? Certainly gods such as Sarapis, Isis and Tyche would be more central to any study, not novelties ('new gods') but gods that had been prominent for several centuries. Even more striking than these gods would have been all the cults around the Greek East dedicated to the Roman emperor. Nor, with our attention focused on the first century AD, could we even argue that worshipping a ruler was a new and unprecedented occurrence. Earlier examples could be found dating back to the fourth century BC, most notably those with the Hellenistic kings as their objects. Occasional, though fairly muted, scepticism can be detected about such ruler gods; Pausanias laments that nowadays gods are only born from men 'in the flattering words addressed to the power'; Plutarch, again with a focus on flattery, is very critical of all the divine honours given centuries earlier in Athens to Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes, though his point may be the inappropriateness of cult for these people rather than any rejection of the practice of cult for human rulers *per se*.<sup>3</sup> But if we were to turn back to classical Greece, intellectual scepticism about the Olympian gods themselves is not hard to find.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, by prioritizing the first century AD in this way, we might imagine that classical Greece was but one stage in the development of 'true' Greek religion.

Viewed from the perspective of classical Greece, as it so often has been, however, all this looked to earlier scholars like decline.<sup>5</sup> Tyche, a personification of fortune widespread from the Hellenistic period onwards, marked what Nilsson described as 'the last stage in the secularizing of religion'.<sup>6</sup> But it was ruler cult that fared worst, pushed to the sidelines of the history of religion, its religious content often denied altogether.<sup>7</sup> Yet for a majority of the thousand years

3 Paus. 8.2.4–5, Pirenne-Delforge, this volume, Chapter 19; Plut. *Demetr.* 10–13, on which A. Erskine, 'Ruler cult and the early Hellenistic city', in H. Hauben and A. Meeus (eds), *The Age of the Successors 323–276 BC* (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming); that elite scepticism about the imperial cult was common is rejected by S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 114–16, arguing against the position of G. Bowersock, 'Greek intellectuals and the imperial cult', in W. den Boer (ed.), *Le culte des souverains dans l'empire romain* (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1973), pp. 179–206.

4 Trépanier, this volume, Chapter 14.

5 Conversely, for a Hellenistic Greek viewing classical Athens as a low point, see Polyb. 6.44.

6 M. P. Nilsson, *Greek Piety* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 86.

7 For D. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1.1 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), p. 11, ruler cult reflects 'shrewd political calculation'. The ruler might be 'paid homage in the form of a cult', but this did not hold 'any implication of a theological or legal nature'; cf. W. S. Ferguson, 'Legalised absolutism en route from Greece to Rome', *American Historical Review* 18 (1912), pp. 29–47 at 29 ('essentially a

or so of documented Greek religion (roughly from Homer to the 'triumph' of Christianity), rulers, whether kings or Roman emperors, are found being accorded divine status. Far from an anomaly, this phenomenon could be considered the norm. None the less, it has often been cited as evidence for the degeneration of Greek religion, an interpretation encouraged by treating classical Greece as the standard from which everything else was a deviation. The practice of giving divine honours to kings was vividly and negatively characterized by E. R. Dodds: 'When old gods withdraw, the empty thrones cry out for a successor, and with good management, or even without management, almost any perishable bag of bones may be hoisted into the vacant seat.'<sup>8</sup> Ruler cult is here the consequence of the failure of traditional Greek religion.

Rather, we should recognize that the Greek concept of god always had the potential to include men, but that circumstances did not necessarily bring this about. Ruler cult should force us to reconsider our idea of what Greeks meant by gods. Whether it is Antiochos III at Teos or the emperor Augustus at numerous cities in Asia Minor, cults of these rulers are accompanied by all the regular features of the civic worship of a divinity: sanctuaries, festivals, priests, statues and sacrifices.<sup>9</sup> In the impressive temple of Augustus in Caesarea Maritima, Josephus notes that there was a colossal statue of Augustus equal in size to the statue of Zeus at Olympia, on which it was said to have been modelled.<sup>10</sup> Here the idea of emperor and god appear to merge, but there are hints elsewhere

(footnote 7 *continued*)

political device', though note that Ferguson is arguing against those who do see it as 'a manifestation of religious life'), or on the Roman imperial cult, J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 78 ('fundamentally a secular institution'). For Nilsson, *Greek Piety*, p. 85, the worship of kings 'was irreligious, a glorification of naked power'. Note the virtual absence of ruler cult from D. Ogden's otherwise comprehensive *Companion to Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

8 E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), p. 242; cf. E. R. Bevan, 'The deification of Hellenistic kings', *English Historical Review* 16 (1901), pp. 625–39 at 631: 'I think one must believe that in the case of a large number of worshippers the religious acts were mere formalities. They were a product not of superstition, but of scepticism. It was certainly in a rationalist age that the practice arose. These people were not afraid to pay divine honours to men, just because such acts had lost the old sense of awe, because religion as a whole had been lowered to a comedy'; V. Ehrenberg, *The Greek State* (London: Routledge, 1974<sup>2</sup>), pp. 169–70: 'Hardly ever can we think of them as the product of a genuinely religious demand.'

9 Antiochos: P. Herrmann, 'Antiochos der Große und Teos', *Anadolu* 9 (1965), pp. 29–159; J. Ma, *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002<sup>2</sup>), pp. 308–17. Augustus: Price, *Rituals and Power*.

10 Jos. *BJ* 1.414, the presence also of a statue of 'Roma, equal to that of Hera at Argos' suggests that it was in fact a temple of Roma and Augustus; for the colossal

that ritual may have held back from wholly embracing the divinity of the ruler, especially when it came to sacrifices.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, from the Hellenistic period onwards rulers, both kings and more commonly emperors, could be and were called *theoi*, the term customarily translated as 'gods'. Although its use in the context of ruler cult has been the subject of discussion, in particular by Simon Price, the implications that calling rulers gods could have for the understanding of the concept of divinity in general have yet to be explored fully.<sup>12</sup>

In the opening chapter of the present volume Albert Henrichs identifies three characteristics of Greek gods: immortality, anthropomorphism and power; for him the kings and emperors of the post-classical world fail to make the grade as genuine gods because, although they have power, they are so obviously not immortal. Even here things are not as absolute as they might at first sight appear; inscriptions show that, on occasion at least, some form of immortality may have come to be seen as an attribute of the divine ruler, one not contradicted by physical death; thus the people of Kyzikos refer to the greatness of Gaius' immortality (*athanasia*).<sup>13</sup> None the less, we should make allowances for inconsistencies in religion; it is not devised according to written rules.<sup>14</sup> Other aspects of divinity may have played a greater role in the conception of the divine character of rulers. Power is certainly one aspect, but related to this is the king's capacity to respond to prayers and his role as a source of benefactions.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the study of ruler cult may here contribute to our understanding of what Greeks believed a god to be.

statue of Zeus, see Barringer, this volume, Chapter 8; for colossal statues in ruler cult, see Price, *Rituals and Power*, pp. 187–8.

11 Price, *Rituals and Power*, pp. 207–33; indeed, as Price notes on p. 233, the emperor needed the divine protection that came from sacrifices on his behalf. Cf. also A. Chaniotis, 'The divinity of Hellenistic rulers', in A. Erskine (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 431–45 at 433, and S. R. F. Price, 'Gods and emperors: the Greek language of the Roman imperial cult', *JHS* 104 (1984), pp. 79–95 at 88, on the significance of the phrase *isotheoi timai*.

12 Note in particular Price, 'Gods and emperors'.

13 *SIG* 798, lines 4–5, Price, 'Gods and emperors', pp. 87–8.

14 Cf. H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1990 and 1993).

15 Chaniotis, 'The divinity of Hellenistic rulers', p. 432, notes that the 'essential feature' of the Greek idea of divinity is not immortality but 'willingness to hear the prayers of men'; similarly J. D. Mikalson, *Religion in Hellenistic Athens* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998), p. 83, sees the stress on immortality as 'essentially a theological distinction, to be found in the literature of the archaic and classical periods'; instead he tries to bridge the gap between traditional gods and those such as Antigonos and Demetrios by stressing similarity of functions.

It might be tempting to see rulers as gods moving into a gap left vacant by the 'traditional' gods. Pausanias, for example, writes how back in the old days men and gods mixed together with each other but nowadays all has changed. Where once gods would have openly visited their wrath on those who did wrong, now they wait until after the wrongdoers have died.<sup>16</sup> All this suggests a greater distance between gods and men in the present – indeed it implies that gods are largely absent from the contemporary world – but the past it looks back to is no recent one: instead it is the remote age of myth. For many, however, the gods were never far away and experiencing a divine epiphany was always a possibility (even if an unlikely one), whether in archaic Greece or in the early Roman empire. Famously the people of Lystra in Lykaonia, after witnessing an act of miraculous healing by Paul, believed that he and his companion Barnabas were Hermes and Zeus come among them. The priest of Zeus even made ready to begin sacrifices in their honour. Reported as it is in Acts this is clearly a story with a message: pagan beliefs look foolish when contrasted with the truth of the Christian god.<sup>17</sup> None the less, this should not lead us to neglect the presupposition on which it is based: that for the inhabitants of the Greek world the gods were a real and potent presence.

16 Paus. 8.2.4–5, Pirenne-Delforge, this volume, Chapter 19, with text in English and Greek.

17 Acts 14.6–18. On epiphanies, see n. 1 above. For fifth- and fourth-century evidence for perceived proximity between gods and men, see Klöckner, this volume, Chapter 6.

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